THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

An Illu… Weekly
Founded A.º …nj. Franklin

DECEMBER 23, 1916 — 5c. THE COPY

Beginning

A SCRAP OF PAPER—By Arthur Somers Roche

For the Christmas holidays

buy

California Walnuts

in the

DIAMOND BRAND PACKAGE

California Walnuts are the finest in the world, and the handy one-pound DIAMOND BRAND package assures you of high-grade California nuts. DIAMOND BRAND Walnuts are grown, tested and packed by the California growers, each package guaranteed to contain an unusually high percentage of perfect nuts.

Your GROCER has California Walnuts in the DIAMOND BRAND package, or can get them for you from his jobber on short notice. Order today.

California Walnut Growers Association
Los Angeles, California

California Walnut Candy

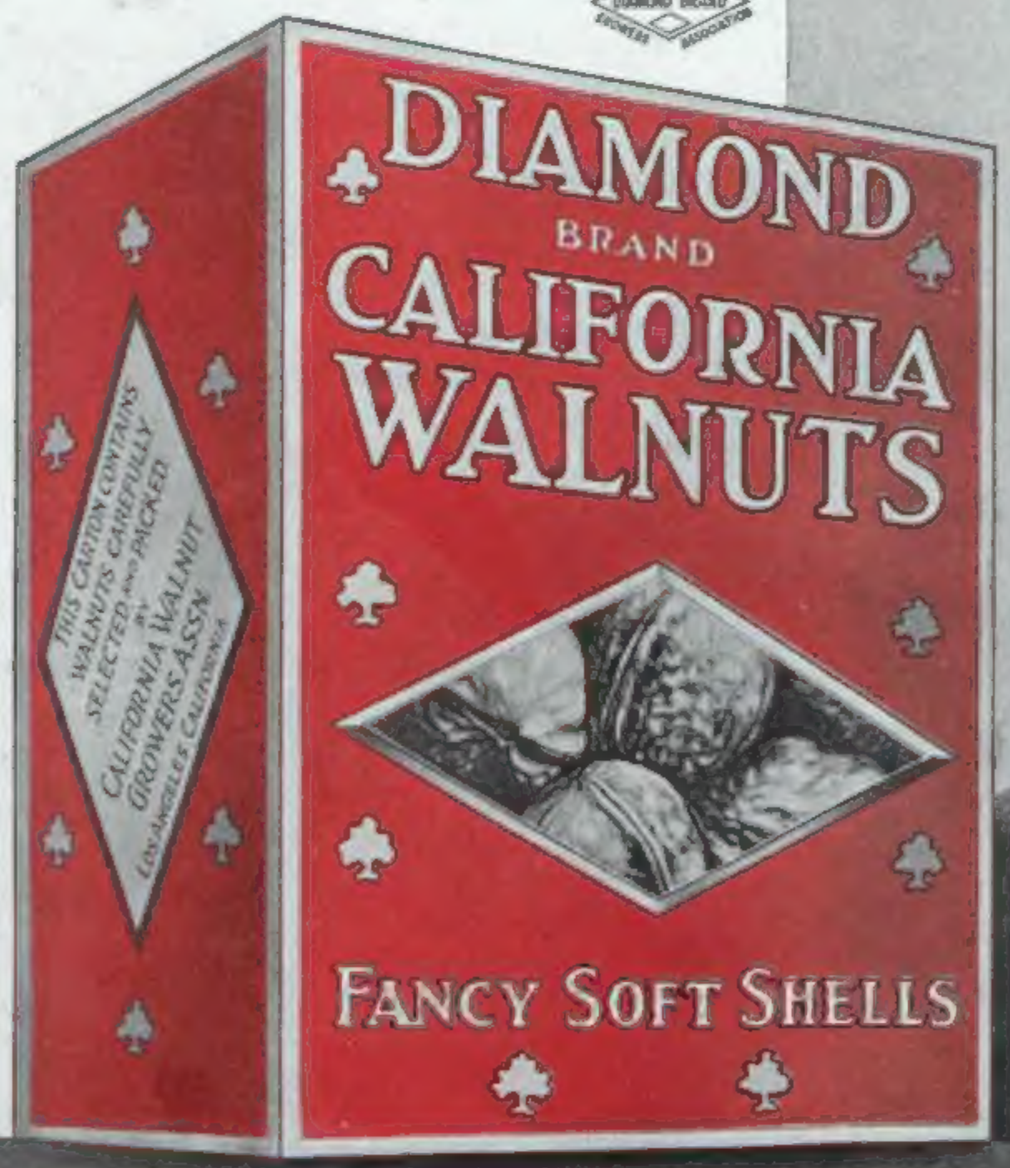
(Panoche)

Three cups brown sugar, one cup milk, butter size of walnut, one cup of broken walnuts, one teaspoon vanilla, pinch of salt.

Boil sugar, milk and butter until firm when tried in cold water. Remove from the fire and stir. When partially cooled add the vanilla and walnuts. Beat until creamy. Pour into buttered pans to cool.

California Walnut Bread

One-half cup sugar, two cups milk, four cups flour, one cup chopped walnuts, eight level teaspoons baking powder, a little salt. Mix the dry ingredients, then add milk. Let stand twenty minutes. Bake in a deep pan in a slow oven.



One pound net

25¢

An Advertisement by

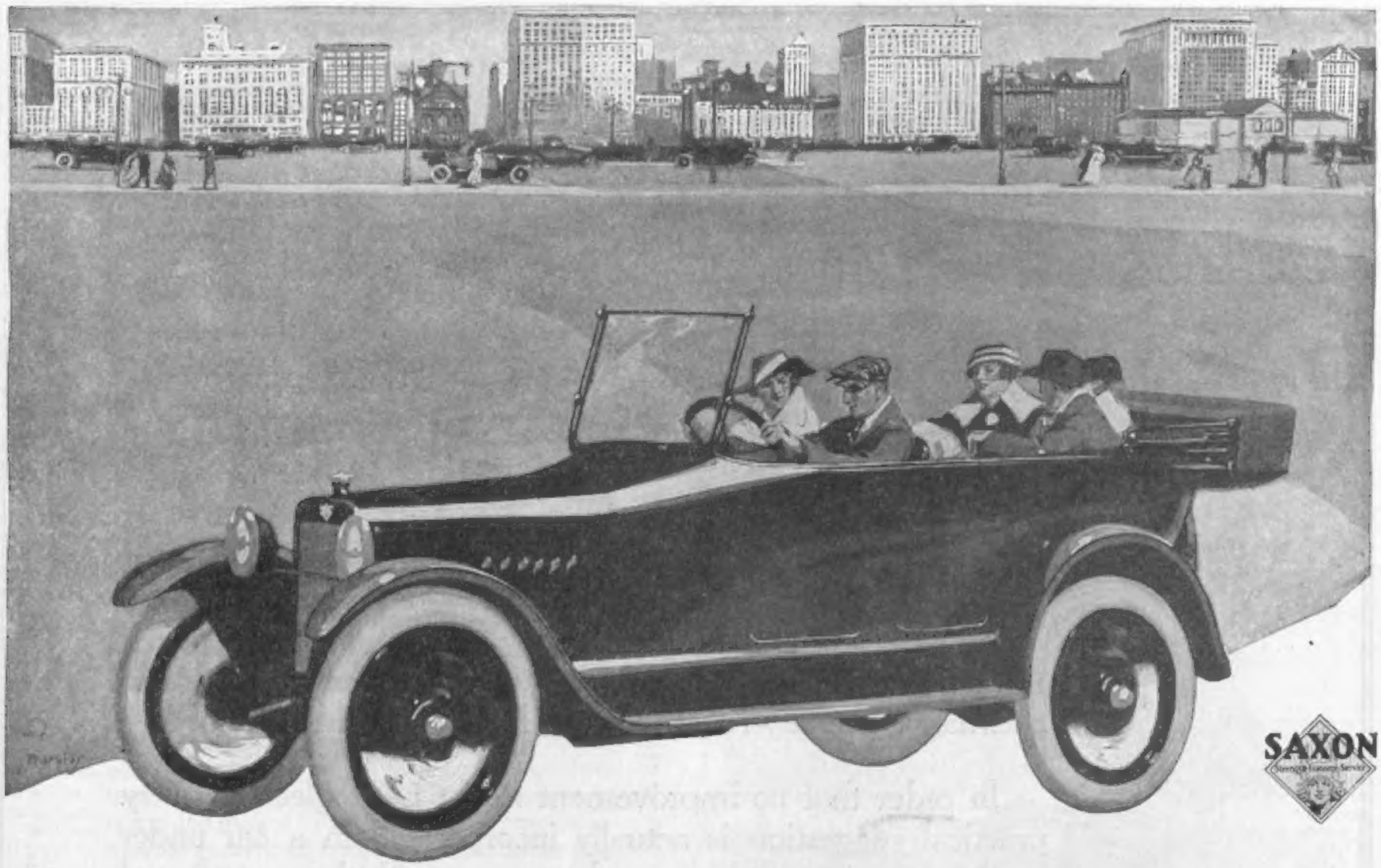
THE PULLMAN COMPANY

Anticipation of those details of personal service, or equipment, which may add to the passengers' comfort, convenience or safety, is a responsibility which the Pullman Company for fifty years, has consistently fulfilled.

In order that no improvement might be neglected, every practical suggestion is actually incorporated in a car under construction in our shops, and once a month these suggested improvements are personally inspected by the Committee on Standards composed of the higher officials of the Company.

The development of the sleeping car, the parlor car and the enclosed vestibule are characteristic steps in the constant advance made by the Pullman Company in the perfection of its equipment. To this end every new invention practical for Pullman car construction is carefully considered, and, if contributing to safety or convenience, is adapted to car requirements.

Many of these improvements are of a highly technical nature and contribute chiefly to safety. Others result primarily in added comfort, or convenience to passengers. All serve to anticipate the passengers' requirements and meet the most exacting demands of the traveling public.



People Generally Are Convinced

That Saxon "Six" Is the Best Car in Its Class

Nor is this belief in Saxon "Six" superiority confined to one part of the country. You'll find it equally as strong in the West as in the East, in the city as in the country.

But what are the specific reasons that have led motor car buyers the country over to this same clear-cut conclusion?

We need only mention the extraordinary gasoline economy of Saxon "Six," its unusual freedom from repairs, its roominess, its comfort, its superlative endurance.

These are too well known and appreciated to call for further comment.

And then we come to what is perhaps the biggest single factor in Saxon "Six" success—namely, the Saxon "Six" motor.

It is understood, of course, that uniform torque—smooth power-flow—is the standard sought by all motor car makers.

With a "less-than-six-cylinder" motor there are naturally intervals between impulses or explosions.

These spell vibration and consequent wear on the motor and parts.

With a six-cylinder motor, however, one explosion merges smoothly into the next.

And this vibrationless power-flow gives rise to several important advantages.

It practically eliminates wear on the motor and parts, gives longer life to the motor, enables higher maximum speed and lower minimum speed, and produces nearly absolute operative quietness.

And best of all it adds perceptibly to the performance of the car.

Just how much it adds can best be grasped, perhaps, through comparison.

Side by side, all conditions equal, a well-known car of less than six cylinders and a Saxon "Six" were tested for acceleration by a group of engineers.

Going from a stand to 45 miles per hour the "less-than-six" required an average time of 30 seconds in six successive trials. Saxon "Six" required only 23 seconds.

In short, Saxon "Six" showed 22% faster "pick-up."

Figured as precisely as possible, the power-flow of Saxon "Six" per foot traveled was 98% smoother than that of the "less-than-six."

This smoother power-flow that helps increase the get-away speed of Saxon "Six" also plays its part in the pulling power of Saxon "Six."

Up a mile-long, winding hill—with a 15 to 18% grade—the "less-than-six" mentioned before was timed at exactly 2 minutes. Once a gear-shift was compelled.

Saxon "Six" made the same hill in 1 minute and 2 seconds—without shifting gears.

You'll most quickly appreciate the importance of these comparative records when you consider that both were stock cars—the same cars you find on salesroom floors the country over.

So you see they are records you can safely accept as justly illustrative of the superiority of Saxon "Six."

(658)

Saxon "Six" is $815 *f. o. b.* Detroit.

SAXON "SIX"

A BIG TOURING CAR FOR FIVE PEOPLE

SAXON MOTOR CAR CORPORATION, DETROIT

Published Weekly

The Curtis Publishing Company

Cyrus H. K. Curtis, President
C. H. Ludington, Secretary and Treasurer
F. S. Collins, General Business Manager
William Boyd, Advertising Director

Independence Square, Philadelphia

London: 0, Henrietta Street
Covent Garden, W. C.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Founded A°D° 1728 *by* Benj. Franklin

Copyright, 1916, by The Curtis Publishing Company in the United States and Great Britain

George Horace Lorimer
EDITOR

Churchill Williams, F. S. Bigelow,
A. W. Neall, Associate Editors

Walter H. Dower, Art Editor

Entered at the Philadelphia Post-Office as Second-Class Matter

Entered as Second-Class Matter at the Post-Office Department Ottawa, Canada

Volume 189 *PHILADELPHIA, DECEMBER 23, 1916* *Number 26*

A SCRAP OF PAPER

By Arthur Somers Roche

ILLUSTRATED BY WILL FOSTER

MASTERMAN'S eyes gleamed through his heavy glasses. "You've heard me, gentlemen," he said. "I have given you, verbatim, the words of Schlossfelt, the words of Montfoucault. What's the answer?"

Blaisdell and Cardigan looked at each other. Multi-millionaires, wielders of Titanic power, they shrank in the presence of Masterman. They controlled a country's food supply, a country's fuel supply; but Masterman was bigger than they—Masterman controlled transportation.

Blaisdell fumbled with his collar.

"It looks like a pretty big thing," he said nervously. "Too big! I'm pretty well satisfied with things as they are. The United States are big enough for me. I don't know enough about conditions abroad ——"

"You don't have to," snapped Masterman. "Let the others attend to that! You, Cardigan?"

"What's All This About? I Tell You, I'm an American Citizen With Rights!"

Cardigan was less of a coward than Blaisdell. The latter had inherited his wealth—at least, the foundation of it. But Cardigan had begun life as a laborer, and had not entirely lost the burly courage that had made him master of coal. But even Cardigan hesitated.

"There'll be the devil's own row, Masterman. Have you discounted that?"

Masterman's smile was contemptuous.

"Row? Of course there will. But what we do we do with the sanction of the law. And does a man gain a whole world without risk? Have you run no risks in your lives? Faugh! I've said enough. Shall I give Schlossfelt and Montfoucault the word to go ahead—that we are with them?"

He was not eloquent; yet no actor, no orator, could have spoken more intently, with greater suggestion of power, of force held in leash. It was as though, having summed up, he left the choice with them; and yet, despite his calm, both men knew that they would do as he bade them, not because he would compel them but because greed and the logic of his position impelled them.

It was not the first time the subject at issue had been discussed. Many times before had Masterman laid the whole project before the two men whom he would have as his allies. But now, with Schlossfelt and Montfoucault with him, with the two greatest bankers in the country allied with the masters of transportation, of fuel and of food ——

"I want you with me wholeheartedly or not at all," said Masterman. "What is the answer?"

"Give them the word," said Blaisdell.

Yet as he spoke he cast a furtive glance out the window, down upon the hurrying throngs on Broad Street, as though fear dwelt among those busy pedestrians, fear for Blaisdell, not fear of him.

"I'm in," said Cardigan.

Masterman looked from one to the other, as though he would read their hearts. Indeed, he did read their hearts; read the crookedness and treachery that the pious exterior of Blaisdell and the bluff and burly front of Cardigan tried to conceal. He smiled, thin-lipped.

"One moment, gentlemen."

He rose from his place at the head of the table and walked to a typewriter by the window, and sitting down before it slid in a sheet of paper. There had been many occasions in the past when it had been dangerous to intrust certain writings to the knowledge of even the most trustworthy secretary. Masterman picked out the letters with a quite remarkable celerity. He wrote ten minutes, whipped the paper out of the machine, walked to the table, with a fountain pen signed his name at the foot of the sheet, and shoved the writing over to Blaisdell. Blaisdell read; his jaw dropped.

"Why—this is madness, Masterman! You don't expect us to sign such a thing as this!"

"I've signed it," said Masterman coldly.

Cardigan arose and peered over Blaisdell's shoulder. He, too, read the writing. He, too, protested:

"But look here, Masterman, you said that what we did we did with the sanction of the law. But there are a dozen laws against this thing! It would mean jail. Jail? There isn't a jail in the country strong enough to hold the signers of that paper from the clutches of the mob if ever they should find out. This isn't within the law, and you know it isn't."

"You mean our contemplated action or the signing of that paper?" queried Masterman, smiling.

"The action is all right, because collusion and agreement can never be proved," replied Cardigan. "Each event will apparently be independent of any other, and due solely to economic conditions, to the weather—to anything to which we choose to ascribe each single happening. But this thing lumps them all together! This is proof conclusive—why, this is putting our necks into the noose! Why should we sign it?"

"Yes, why?" demanded Blaisdell.

"Montfoucault, Schlossfelt and their associates cannot win alone," replied Masterman. "They must have assurance that we are with them. This paper is assurance."

"But you don't intend to give them that paper?" cried Blaisdell, aghast.

"Certainly not," said Masterman, still cool. "I intend to keep it myself."

"Then if they'll accept your verbal assurance that we're with them, why this paper?"

Masterman smiled still; but it was a smile beneath which the questioning eyes of Blaisdell wavered, and the florid face of Cardigan became a shade redder.

"Why? Well, gentlemen, between equals the word of Martin Masterman has never been doubted, because it has never been broken. Schlossfelt and the others will accept my word where, if I must be plain, they would not accept your bonds. My word is good: they will go ahead and risk millions on my word. But I, gentlemen, will not risk millions, or thousands even, on your words! I want your signatures to that paper, and then—if you try to welsh, if you try to draw back, I'll go down to ruin myself, but you'll go with me! Am I clear?"

"You're insulting!" said Blaisdell with an effort at dignity.

But Cardigan laughed; Cardigan had no thin skin.

"Forget it, Blaisdell," he jeered. "When money is the prize—well, any man can talk as he likes to me if he pays the price! Masterman is paying the price. It means—we know what it means. If Masterman doesn't care to accept our words—well, I wouldn't take the word of more than one man in a matter like this. His name is Martin Masterman. You see, Blaisdell, you and I decided to become tremendously rich by any means at hand. So did Masterman—with the one exception that he would not betray a

business associate—until the association was ended. He's kept to that. We both know that his word is good to us while he's doing business with us. But yours and mine—well, Blaisdell, I'm willing to admit that when a matter of millions is involved I think of myself all the time. So do you, only you won't admit it even to yourself. Here, give me the paper—I'll sign!"

He wrote his name beneath that of Masterman, in the huge scrawl that was all his clumsy fingers, still stiffened by that youthful toil as a laborer, could accomplish. He eyed his signature with satisfaction; he had not been able to read or write until his twenty-sixth year, and had not yet lost his pride in the art. He pushed the paper toward Blaisdell, who still hesitated.

"Masterman, you're going to keep this thing guarded like ——"

"All our plans would be irrevocably wrecked if that paper were discovered," replied Masterman. "Indeed, we'd be torn limb from limb. But I would rather be torn limb from limb than have my fortune wrested from me. And you and Cardigan by treachery could wrest it from me. This paper is a guaranty against your treachery. Should you and Cardigan break faith with me, I shall show this paper to the world, knowing that my downfall is yours. But while you work with me this paper will be as secure as man can make anything. It will be in the vaults downstairs. I will take it there myself immediately you have signed it."

With this assurance Blaisdell seemed content, as well he might have been, for the vaults in the basement of the Masterman building were the last word in burglar, fire and earthquake protection. The document would be safe there. Blaisdell signed, his very small chirography seeming indicative of character as against the huge scrawl of Cardigan, which seemed to express the piratical nature of the coal lord. For Cardigan was a modern pirate, while Blaisdell was a Machiavelli who worked in the dark and did not disdain smallness in attaining his ends. Both were Lilliputian beside Martin Masterman.

The Lord of the Granary and the Market pushed the paper toward Masterman, and he who was Transportation, again showing his thin-lipped smile, reached for it. A knock on the door made his hand pause, hovering over the paper.

"Well?" he called angrily. It was a rule, heretofore inviolate, that no one should approach this private office, when Masterman was in conference, unless he had rung his bell. The voice of the man on the other side of the door showed that he was fearful of the reception that would be accorded the breaking of the rule. It quavered:

"Excuse me, Mr. Masterman, but you said that—no matter where you were—if a wire should come from Mr. Schlossfelt to bring it to you at once."

Masterman's frown vanished as swiftly as it had come. He walked to the door and unlocked it. A hand appeared, holding a yellow paper. The master of transportation seized it and read the message.

"Reply 'All settled; will write details.' Sign my name." He closed the door and turned to his companions. "Schlossfelt is in a hurry," he said exultingly. "In three months or less we'll have the people of this country ——"

He stopped short and stared. Cardigan was standing on the table, clawing madly at a sheet of paper that floated upward. Blaisdell, white of face, was watching him helplessly. For the closing of the door had caused a puff of wind which had lifted the signed agreement from the polished surface of the table!

Masterman stood still only a fraction of a second. Then: "You can't reach it! Close the window ——"

He acted upon his own word. He sprang to the window, open at top and bottom. He brought down the lower half with a crash that shook the room. He pushed upward at the other half; but it needed a long pole to push that closed, and the long pole stood six feet away. Before Masterman could grab it and return, the paper, on the vagrant current of air that had been set in motion by the closing door, floated through the opened top and out of the room!

Cardigan, who had faced two thousand striking, murder-bent miners and cursed them into silence, and Blaisdell, whose nimble wit had come to the aid of the highest-priced lawyers when these had been stumped, stared gaping. It was Masterman who acted, who proved why he was greater than these.

"Watch it," he ordered, "where it falls! Watch!"

He leaped to the door and opened it. To someone in the outer room he called:

"Paper—out my window—in the street—ten thousand to the man that brings it back if no one has had a chance to read it. Quick—into the street—I'll point from the window!"

He was back in the room and at the window, elbowing the slight Blaisdell and the burly Cardigan aside, that he might have the better view. Together they stared, while the flimsy sheet, wind-borne, rose and fell. It swooped suddenly down; then an upward draft caught it; it rose a hundred feet; it passed over a low roof. Masterman rushed from the room; he dashed through a couple of offices and came to a window that looked out upon a side street. Behind him came the other two, while amazed clerks that dared not show their amazement lifted eyebrows and shoulders.

It was Blaisdell who saw the paper first. "There," he cried.

The others looked and saw it. It was dropping now limply, no current of air sustaining it. Masterman turned to the others.

"Stay here," he gasped. "Watch! The clerks—the other street ——"

He was out of the office, and hatless, flushed, a sight to cause the market to drop fifty points, was rushing down a flight of stairs to the side street where his reward-desirous clerks were not waiting. Behind, Cardigan and Blaisdell strained their eyes, watching the paper that meant more than fame or fortune, that meant life itself, should it fall into strange hands. And then a breeze swept up the side street. While Masterman was yet on the stairs they saw the paper swoop upward, then slant downward and drop before a man far up the street. They saw the man bend over and pick it up. Fear clutching at their hearts, they saw him read. Cardigan imagined he saw a smile of vicious exultation on the man's face; Blaisdell thought he could see the lips set in a grim threat. Then Masterman appeared on the sidewalk below. He looked up at them; they pointed frantically up the street. He did not understand. Cardigan started from the office; Blaisdell followed. They dashed into the hall and, like Masterman a few seconds before, raced down the stairs. A dozen clerks looked after them. One spoke.

"I hope they don't trip on the stairs," he said. "My lip's cracked."

And the innocent joy with which this hackneyed humor was received was proof that social unrest was growing. When clerks dare gibe at their divinely appointed masters the world is in a sad state.

Now That the Crook Had Got His Nerve Back Again, It Amused Him to Know That He Was Followed

II

SIR FITZ-ROY EUSTACE CLAVERING BRAY, born Peter Whittier, and known internationally to the police and the top planes of the underworld as "Handsome Harry" Mack, was as quick-witted a denizen of the world of crime as had ever outwitted the detective bureaus of a score of cities. He was no dealer in petty larceny; anything less than ten thousand dollars looked like chicken feed to Handsome Harry. And there was no sum which his imagination had set as the limit in hauls. He knew that the famous Adam Worth had dealt in the hundreds of thousands; it was Handsome Harry's ambition to make Worth look like a piker. Handsome Harry had always believed that some day he would deal in millions. Meanwhile, until that day of millions came along, he would continue to deal in tens and scores of thousands. He had done so, with such remarkable success that he had never graced a jail for more than eight days on a stretch, lack of conclusive evidence causing his speedy release always. For Handsome Harry always chose his victims from that class which, given time to cool down, decides that it is better to put up with the loss of a lot of money than to admit to the world how easily it may be swindled. In other words, Handsome Harry chose to mulct those who were conceited snobs as well as millionaires. And they always failed to appear against him in court.

Technically speaking, he had no criminal record, inasmuch as no conviction had ever been found against him; but in New York, Paris and London his *dossier* was on police file, and plain-clothes men often called him aside from little gatherings in hotel bars or dining rooms and hinted to him that if he didn't return to his friends the plain-clothes men would be glad to make his apologies for him. He was catalogued as a suspicious character, and the police tried to keep informed of his whereabouts. And there is international courtesy between police departments. Twelve days ago Scotland Yard had cabled New York that Handsome Harry Mack, under the *nom de guerre* of Archibald Grantham, was aboard a certain liner. Detectives had met the ship at quarantine. They had congratulated Mr. Grantham on having won approximately twelve thousand dollars at poker on the short voyage, an incident that had come to their attention as soon as they boarded the ship, and told him that such a lucky man was not desired in the United States—he might amass all the wealth in the country.

He was advised to take the first ship back to London, whereupon Handsome Harry had smilingly proved to their satisfaction that he was an American citizen, and had been reluctantly permitted to land. But within twelve hours he was taken to police headquarters and assured that it was the earnest intention of the department to make the town too hot to hold him, and asked if some other city wouldn't be as welcome a residence for him. He took the hint. He boarded a train for Chicago, and a plain-clothes man saw him off.

He went to Chicago, but stayed there only until a train left for Montreal. In the Canadian city he fumed and fretted for a week, cursing the luck that had drawn him into a poker game, thus advertising the name of Archibald Grantham, for under that name he had intended to trim certain bucket shops with a new and highly involved scheme of swindling that had stood the acid test in Berlin, Madrid and Paris. He had brought letters of introduction—forged by a chirographic friend—and now they were useless, for Handsome Harry was clumsy with a pen, and knew not how to imitate another's handwriting. Of course the name of Grantham was worse than useless now.

So in Montreal he cursed his luck. Then that luck was good to him. He became acquainted in the hotel bar with an English gentleman who in one hour was due to take a train and travel, for a bit of hunting, into the Canadian Northwest, to be gone some four months. They drank together, Handsome Harry making the Englishman's last hour one of joyous memory. Before parting they exchanged cards, and Handsome Harry Mack also managed to abstract from the Englishman's pocket a letter introducing the seeker of sport to a certain large bank. Evidently the Englishman purposed making use of it before his return home.

Handsome Harry saw the Englishman aboard his train. A little later he, too, took a train—for the States. On arriving at his destination he presented the stolen letter of introduction to the bank, and deposited therein English gold and paper to the value of fifteen thousand dollars. He then registered at a hotel under the name of the sporting Englishman—Sir Fitz-Roy Eustace Clavering Bray.

Everything had worked out well. It was imperative that he pose as a man of means and position for the furtherance of his scheme against the bucket shops. The identity of Archibald Grantham had been rudely torn from him, but that of Sir Fitz-Roy was for the time being his—unless the police happened to see him. This, however, was a risk he must take, a risk worth taking, too; for the part of Sir Fitz-Roy, vouched for as it would be by the bank to which he had presented the letter and where he had made the good-sized deposit, was capable of greater results even than that of the carefully prepared part of Grantham which carelessness had lost to him.

For a week he had managed to avoid recognition by any detectives. One week longer, and he wouldn't care if he were recognized; for he would have concluded the trimming, already well on its way, of the bucket shop which he had chosen as his victim, and would have done so in a way so entirely within the law that recovery, even by civil suit, of the money he'd have won would be a hazy thing, and one not attempted by any bucket shop, undesirous of certain kinds of advertising as these places were.

So "Sir Fitz-Roy" was in an extremely happy frame of mind. The police didn't dream that he was back again; it was great sport posing as an English baronet. Cards had been left at his hotel by many persons prominent in society; and he told himself that with his address and apparent position and wealth he might even make the acquaintance of some heiress and marry her before his real identity was suspected. Pleasant vistas opened before him, but he turned his eyes from them. They were uncertainties—the bucket-shop trick almost a reality. Yet it did no harm to dream, and he was dreaming when a paper dropped on the pavement before him.

Half-unconsciously he stooped and picked it up; but he was wholly alert one-tenth of a second later, for the first words he read were the names, freshly inked, of Masterman, Cardigan and Blaisdell. He had seen facsimiles of the signatures of all three, and knew them as he would have known their owners' much-published faces. Two seconds more and he had read the typewritten lines above the signatures. He saw at once the tremendous value of his possession. His time had come! He had always known that it would come, and now that it was here he was not taken off his feet. A lesser man would have been dazed; but Handsome Harry Mack only saw in this paper his big opportunity. Adam Worth was to be made to look like a piker at last!

He folded the paper swiftly and thrust it into a pocket. No doubt of its genuineness assailed his confidence. How it had happened to drop before him, how its signers had let it get from their possession, these were matters of unimportance, questions whose answers could wait. The important thing was to make his get-away until he had time to plan. For it was inconceivable that the loss of this paper could remain unnoticed for more than a few moments, or that an immediate search would not be made for it. He turned on his heel, to stare into the eyes, a score of yards away, of Detective Connors, who had been among those headquarters' gentlemen who had greeted him on his arrival in America. Connors' eyes lighted with surprised recognition. He took a step toward the international crook.

The mind of Handsome Harry was lightning quick: Connors would place him under arrest as a suspicious character. As a matter of form he would be searched at headquarters; and this paper, of incalculable value, would be turned over to the dull-witted police. He did not know or care what the police would do with it. Enough for him that the golden path of fortune would be closed if the paper were read by them—it must not be found on him!

As Detective Connors stepped forward Handsome Harry turned. It would do no good to run; in the crowded Wall Street district he'd be lucky to go a hundred yards without capture. But the bucket shop which he had been honoring with his patronage was only two doors away. With Detective Connors fifteen yards back and coming strong, Handsome Harry entered the office of Bryant, Manners & Company. He glanced over his shoulder; Connors was approaching at rather better than a fast walk.

Bryant, Manners & Company had a safe for the convenience of their customers, but there was no time to avail himself of that repository. Connors was right behind him. Undoubtedly a hundred-dollar bill passed to a clerk would make one of those underpaid worthies keep the paper for him. But he could not risk the clerk's reading it, and there was no time to place it in an envelope. All these considerations had passed through Handsome Harry's brain in the few seconds that elapsed between his recognition of Connors and his entrance into the bucket shop. And his plan, risky and reckless, yet the only plan, was formed before he crossed the threshold.

Bryant, Manners & Company was a fifth-rate concern. It did business on a one-point margin, and though prosperous enough to be worthy Handsome Harry's swindling efforts, its large volume of business was transacted with clerks, office boys, cheap scalpers and other

The Paper That Meant More Than Fame or Fortune, That Meant Life Itself, Wind-Borne, Rose and Fell

speculators of low degree. There were no rich furnishings, no breath-taking surroundings of wealth. Such things were all very well, reasoned Bryant, Manners & Company, but they awed their class of clientele. The outer office of the bucket shop resembled nothing so much as the outer office of a prosperous police-court shyster, save that the bucket shop was larger.

Customers shed their coats in the warm weather and hung them upon nails on the wall. Cheap cuspidors ornamented the corners. Messenger boys smoked cigarettes and exchanged badinage or brag with the office boys. Clerks made a point of learning a customer's first name and hailing him familiarly. Handsome Harry, who promised to be a comparatively heavy trader, who seemed to have strolled into the office by accident and who, because his presence lent prestige to the place, was accorded a courtesy rare in these brisk surroundings, knew the office far better than he knew his hotel bedroom. He knew which row of nails was for the use of customers; on which hung the coats of the employees. He had that observance for details that would have made him successful as a detective or a reporter. Your first-class crook always has.

He stepped swiftly toward the hat-and-coat-hung nails. He lifted his own hat from his head and placed it upon the last nail on the wall devoted to customers. He stood in the corner formed by two sides of the room. At his left was the row of clerkly garments. Swift as a prestidigitator he whipped the folded paper from his pocket. Unobserved, he slipped it into the outer pocket of the last coat hanging in the row devoted to employees' garments. It was a desperate thing to do, but not for nothing had Handsome Harry frequented this bucket shop in the last few days. He had used his eyes; he knew that this coat belonged to one of the bookkeepers, a young fellow named Grant. His observing eye was backed up by a photographic and retentive memory. He knew that Grant, at precisely twelve-thirty, would pass swiftly from his ledgers behind a grated barrier, would jam his hat on his head and wriggle into his coat and make for the door. Handsome Harry had seen the young man do this on four successive days, and he recalled that not once in the four days had Grant examined his pockets—at least, not while in the office. Of course there was the chance that when he got outside the young man would put his hands inside them, but again there was the chance that he wouldn't. And there was absolutely no chance that Handsome Harry could escape search at headquarters. The risk was great, but there was nothing else to do. If luck were with Handsome Harry he would get back the paper later; if luck were against him—but the Fate that had placed fortune within his grasp would not snatch it away. Handsome Harry, like every other criminal, was superstitious. Fate had always had great things in store for him; Fate would not snatch them away. He hung up his hat and turned round to face the door. Connors entered.

The detective didn't waste a moment. He crossed the room and spoke to the international crook.

"Back in town again, eh? Better come along with me."

"Why?" demanded Harry. "I'm doing nothing."

Connors grinned.

"That's what they all say, always. Get your hat."

Handsome Harry shrugged his well-squared shoulders.

"Oh, very well," he said, reaching for his hat.

Connors linked arms with him. It happened that the plain-clothes man played the market on occasion. Bryant, Manners & Company was the firm that accepted his margins. He was grateful to Handsome Harry for coming along without protest. It does no business any good to have a violent arrest perpetrated within its precincts, and Connors would not willingly injure the bucket shop, which accorded him favors because of his connection with the police.

"We'll just duck out quiet," said the detective. "Later I'll see these people, and if you've been putting up a game on them—well, we'll see."

It happened that there was a little flurry on that morning in Amalgamated Tin; only unimportant clerks, and these busy with books, were in the outer office. They paid no attention to the departure of detective and crook. Captor and captured reached the street and turned toward Broadway. Handsome Harry was too self-contained to protest, although, had it been feasible, he would have killed Connors with as little compunction as he'd have trimmed a sucker. White-hot murder was in his brain and heart. A moment ago and millions had been within his reach; now they were out of his reach, for the moment at least, and might remain so.

"Why didn't you stay out West, Mack?" demanded Connors. "Don't you know you can't get along in this town? You look like a good sensible guy; why can't you take a friendly tip? Why don't you ——"

He turned and looked into the crook's face. What he saw there made him drop his jaw, made the words die away on his lips. For Handsome Harry could control his speech and his actions, but not his thoughts, and the murderous thoughts within him glared through his eyes. Connors tightened his grip of the crook's arm.

"Well," he gasped, "I think I'd better frisk you for a gun! So help me, if I don't think you'd croak me with as much regret as you'd ——"

He ran a hand over Harry's hip pockets. The crook had no weapon. Connors' jaw jutted forward.

"Smile, blast you, smile!" he snarled. "I'll have no crook give me an eye like that if I ——"

Behind them came the sound of running feet. Connors glanced back over his shoulder, and what he saw there made him almost loose his hold of Harry Mack. For the three richest men in America, hatless, breathless, stared at by gaping clerks who recognized them, were coming up the side street. Masterman was slightly in advance; behind him was Cardigan; and, elbows against his ribs, puffing and sweating, Blaisdell brought up the rear.

"Well, I'll be ——" Connors never finished that remark, for Masterman flung himself upon Handsome Harry. His fingers twined about the lapels of Harry's coat. He turned to Blaisdell and Cardigan:

"Is this he?"

Cardigan seized one arm of the crook, and Blaisdell the other, before the astonished Connors could frame a question.

"He's the man," cried Cardigan.

Blaisdell merely puffed.

(Continued on Page 32)

PUTTING ON PERCIVAL

A Story of a Mother-Proof Household—By Corinne Lowe

IN THE annals of zoölogy there is a chapter concerning the domestic life of the sand phalarope. Mrs. Sand Phalarope is a plump bird who regards motherhood as a frivolous episode in a serious career of having a good time. No sooner are her children born than this light-hearted matron flits off to higher realms of enjoyment. Fortunately Mr. Sand Phalarope—a meek creature of much slighter physique than his wife—is endowed with a high sense of the sanctity of the home. He lingers faithfully in the nest, brings up the little ones according to the most approved dietary system, and hopes with all the strength of an affronted home-making instinct that none of them are girls.

Mrs. Sand Phalarope is more than a grace note in the score of life. She is a theme running through many states of society. In unfeathered phalarope circles there is, however, no parental equation founded on the brooding care of papa. The male parent of the human flock does not offset his wife's casual maternity by loitering in the nest to simper: "These are my jewels!" On the contrary, he makes strong-winged flight simultaneously with his wife. Both of them dismiss their parental duties by providing costly surroundings and expert caretakers for the dislocated nest.

The Compensation for the Famous Specialist's Service Was Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars

It was in one of these human phalarope households on upper Fifth Avenue that Percival Dulcimer Van Hook, heir to the fifty million hopes, fears, loves, bewilderments, generosities and meannesses of the human race, and to fifty million dollars of the Van Hook dynasty, first opened his eyes.

"*A la; à la; à la!*" was his opening communication with the world.

This utterance did not mark him for an unusual destiny. Neither, for that matter, did his appearance. Steamily, fiercely red, knees doubled up in oratorical fury, small face puckered into the fretful look of an old man—it was impossible to say more for Percival than one did for little Mike Sullivan, born that same hour on Avenue A. Of course, if one had been of a speculative turn of mind there was abundant chance for wondering how those fifty million dollars were going to react on the other inheritance of hopes, fears, loves, bewilderments, generosities and meannesses of the human race. But the only person now in the room with Percival was not speculative; and Miss Rice, the trained nurse, cannot be blamed for looking from the conventional infant to his phenomenal surroundings.

Young Master Percival Receives

PERCIVAL was well staged—there could be no doubt about that. First of all, there was his cradle. Regarding this, one word: Some five hundred years ago the Sforza family had been the great ward heelers of Milan. They had piled up riches and changed civic destinies; yet it is according to the stern history of the great that the real scope of their lifework had been hidden from them. They never knew that their family cradle would belong to Percival Dulcimer Van Hook. A great New York decorator had unfolded this noble posthumous destiny. At an expense of five thousand dollars he had brought to the Van Hook family this exquisite billow of wood, painted a delicate sea green up to where, just over Percival's head, the wave curled to a thin edge of gilded foam, balancing ever so delicately a roguish gilded sea god with a dolphin in his arms.

From the princely cradle Miss Rice's eyes departed at last to a clothes chest of the same medieval pattern. Then they took in, one by one, the other appointments of the room: The silk-paneled walls; the lace-edged pillow with Percival embroidered at the hem; the snowy little sheets, likewise edged with real lace and embroidered in the infant's name; the half-opened door, offering a glimpse of a baby's bathroom. Returning from this circuit they rested respectfully on a basket of rose-point lace over blue satin. The basket alone, Miss Finch had told her, cost two hundred dollars. Strange person—Miss Finch! The nurse's mind flickered up to her in a little jet of wonder just as this person herself entered the room.

"How is he?" the newcomer whispered anxiously.

"Fine!" replied Miss Rice; and she began to take note of the intruder's face and figure.

Miss Finch was indeed food for wonder. She was one of those English spinsters who dress by the dot-and-dash system. Nothing was ever complete about her attire. It was exactly as if when she got up in the morning she said: "Now to-day I'll button this group." Her conversation, too, had the same half-fastened air. Yet, after all, it was not strange that the lady was abstracted, for she was one of those deputy mothers so often found in the human phalarope household.

Some ten years before this time Miss Finch had been left by her father, a very intellectual dean, with one of those genteel incomes upon which the average Englishwoman goes to Italy and takes up her *pension* career of coming down to dinner with the hereditary evening gown unfastened down the back, and of asking infuriated Americans whether they really have toast in America. Instead, Miss Finch came to New York and received an offer from Mrs. Doré Van Hook, whom, as the pretty Dorcas Dulcimer, she had known at a school in Paris.

Once installed in the Van Hook home, Miss Finch broadened the title of the British Isles as expert manufacturers of things to keep off inclement weather. When the two little daughters arrived she became, in fact, an expert child mackintosh; and few of the happenings from the fourth floor, where she kept them, ever leaked to the parents downstairs.

As the deputy mother lingered there by the splendid Sforza cradle, the two little sisters came in for a first sight of their new brother.

"*Mais il est très gentil, n'est-ce-pas,*" commented politely Marian, the elder of the two, turning about to her French governess, Mademoiselle Cauchois.

Marian, who was now eight, was a little brown girl, with a golden tint of skin that melted into the rich darkness of her straight boxed hair. Her six-year-old sister, Hildegarde, was, on the contrary, a soap bubble of a child, all round and pink and light. The only physical bond between them was that both wore exquisite white frocks trimmed with real lace and hand embroidery. "Neither of those cost less than seventy-five dollars," thought Miss Rice, who was familiar with the cost of simplicity in families like these.

"*Aber er ist sehr roth,*" objected now Hildegarde, directing the remark to her particular moon, Fräulein Fertig.

Discomfited perhaps by this bilingual range of comment, Percival opened his eyes.

"*A la; à la; à la!*" said he curtly.

"*Mademoiselle Eeldegarde, vous avez éveillé votre pauvre petit frère!*" scolded Mademoiselle Cauchois, who, in thus laying the blame solely upon the German-speaking Hildegarde, clearly defined her position toward the noisy vocables of a rival tongue. Meek Fräulein Fertig immediately shouldered the responsibility and took the little blond girl's arm. With an incomparable gesture the six-year-old child threw off the hand.

"Fräulein," she commanded, "you are not to touch me. Haven't I told you that I am the daughter of Mr. Doré Van Hook and that he is one of the richest men in the whole world?"

All of Miss Finch's nearsighted brown gaze was gathered into one seam of horror.

"Hildegarde!" cried she. "Oh, you horrid child! Who ever told you such a thing?"

"Hopkinson," said the child sullenly.

"He shall be discharged on the spot," said Miss Finch. "Remember that nothing in the world is so vulgar as to speak of one's money."

Without a word the little daughter of millions swept out of the room. Her sister and the two governesses followed with all the spirit of three freight trains pulled out by a fiery young engine. To rob others of all appearance of spontaneity was indeed to be Hildegarde's gift through life.

Just outside, in the room appointed for Miss Dilworth, the night nurse engaged for Percival, the party collided with another visitor.

"Father!" cried both little girls in a tone of unaffected pleasure.

Miss Rice, looking through the open door, beheld a fat, middle-sized man, whose waxy red face looked like a huge Easter egg, freshly dyed and glossed. Even the mustache, clipped and yellow, and those three strands of hair across his forehead, which connected the two patches of blond fuzz over his ears, might have been laid there with a brush. Such was Doré Van Hook, already familiarized to the trained nurse by the magazine photographs showing him at the races or the polo games or the horse shows.

"Oh, father," cried Hildegarde, "we haven't seen you since last week at the Horse Show! And tell us: Why didn't Knapsack do better in the Juvenile? We were so disappointed! He didn't show up half as well as the other yearlings."

"No," responded Mr. Van Hook gloomily; "he didn't. But you just wait until two years from now. It always takes about a year or so for those foreign horses to get used to the American climate and food. But Knapsack's got the blood lines—he'll show 'em."

"The Little Typhoon was his sire, wasn't he?" asked Marian.

This bit of conversation, so tender and affable, established, so far as Miss Rice was concerned, Mr. Doré Van Hook's relation to the children's hour. Obviously this was not the same as that of Henry W. Longfellow. Conclusively this father's periods of intercourse with his brood were determined by the horse races at Saratoga, at Charleston and in Maryland, for the sake of which he always uprooted his children—governesses, nurses and all. Once inside Percival's room, he showed much less composure.

How to Spend Money on Babies

"AHEM!" said he, giving a shy, frightened look at the flickering jet of humanity in the wooden billow of a cradle. "Looks a little—er—raw, doesn't he? Ought to get him browned a bit."

Miss Finch, standing at the other end of the cradle, seemed a trifle hurt at these casual remarks.

"He's a lovely baby," said she stiffly.

As a matter of fact, nobody had a better right to proprietary resentment, for Miss Finch may be said to have put on Percival. Before his arrival she went to one of those expensive little shops on East Forty-sixth Street and ordered a layette costing two thousand dollars. Every stitch of this had been executed in Normandy and reflected patient workmanship. Sheets and pillowcases were of the finest materials, edged with handmade lace and embroidered in the infant's name; dresses and petticoats and bibs and caps all took the same line of great resistance; blankets were edged with blue satin and embroidered at the top with Percival. As for the perambulator, that had been made to order at a cost of one hundred and fifty dollars; and now, as Percival lay here in the stately cradle, the enameled sides of this lace-fitted and padded and springy equipage were being inscribed with the owner's initials and with the neurasthenic pheasant, which was the hero of the Van Hook coat of arms. In all of these preliminary arrangements Mrs. Doré Van Hook did not lift a finger.

During the next three months Percival emerged from his state of redness and his stare warmed into a look. To bring him to this state of development had involved, however, a lavish use of money. First of all, there had been the two trained nurses, who, at a weekly wage each of twenty dollars, were to remain with him through the first two years of his life. More important still, there was Doctor Titworth, the famous New York specialist, who, in order to give the Van Hook family the fine flower of his professional services, had for a month before and after Percival's arrival handed over the remainder of his fashionable practice to another physician. The compensation for this consecrated service was thirty-five thousand dollars.

Percival had, in fact, considerably swelled the already turbulent tide of expense in the children's domain. As has already been mentioned, the fourth floor of the Fifth Avenue house had been set apart for the use of the phalarope brood; and here in this mother-proof compartment seven servants, under the direction of Miss Finch and at a total weekly cost of more than one hundred dollars, waited on the two little girls. A man in livery served the meals in the children's dining room and attended to all the boots. A special chauffeur ran the two cars—one closed and one open—dedicated to the use of the children, their maids and governesses. An extra laundress was employed to wash the children's clothes. And, in addition to their two governesses, each little girl had a nurse, who, sleeping in the

room next to hers, prepared her bath, dressed her, mended her clothes, and corresponded to the maid employed by her mother.

In spite, however, of this large and formal organization, Miss Rice was struck at once by its utter independence from the rest of the house. At hardly any point did the life of the fourth floor touch that of the others. Children were whisked in and out by a different elevator from that used by the grown-ups. They never came into contact with their parents' friends; and of the heady torrent of dinners, dances and lunches which drenched Mr. and Mrs. Van Hook, the two little girls were as unconscious as though that fourth-floor nest of theirs were perched on some crag of the Apennines.

That there must be no incriminating sign of being a parent here in the phalarope household was borne in upon Miss Rice one day when she was taking the young Percival out for his airing in Central Park. Carried down in the second elevator by Tompkins, the fourth-floor footman, Miss Rice was just about to go through the front doorway to the street. She was stopped, however, by Mrs. Bellwether Dulcimer, the mother of Mrs. Van Hook.

Mrs. Dulcimer was a famous leader in society—in spite of the fact that those who rode behind her were always getting the cinders. She looked now at the crested perambulator; at the tiny Percival, in his gorgeous pod of ermine, afghan and lace pillow; at Miss Rice, in her English nurse's cap and cape; and she recoiled as violently as though she had just seen a zebra with a sky-blue skin.

"What!" she cried. "You're not going to take that out the front door?"

After this grandmotherly outbreak the small heir to fifty millions was hustled, like a guilty thing, through the rear exit. And no boy at his Halloween pranks ever quaked more with fear of discovery than did the becapped Miss Rice and the stately Tompkins, an afghan on his arm, as they performed this diurnal duty.

A High-Priced Christening

PERCIVAL, meantime, had been introduced to his mother. The introduction apparently failed to register on either side; at least Mrs. Doré Van Hook gave no sign of abandoning her lifework because of the meeting. Propped up among the pillows of her Adam bed, she started in the first week of December to plan for her first big dinner of the winter season.

"Do you know, Miss Dillingham," she was saying to her social secretary one morning, just as Miss Rice brought Percival into the room, "I don't think I'll invite the Catt-Catnips to this dinner! They can just as well wait till the second—it will do her good! She has an idea that she has trapped the whole class. Oh, there's the baby! How is he, Miss Rice? Doing finely? That's good." She pecked at the muffled figure in the nurse's arms, took a reassuring glance at the wrinkled pink face, and then in her wintry smile Miss Rice read the wish to be restored to Miss Dillingham and the Catt-Catnips.

Mrs. Van Hook was at this time a woman of about thirty-two. She had crisp, toasty-brown outlines of hair and cheek, and in between these was set a smile. The smile was firmly bland; and so obviously was it to keep up and not to reveal any interest that it reminded you of the rigid songs chanted by the Aryans through the drear passes of the Himalayas. In this upward curve of her mouth you could trace her whole history.

A chapter of this history revealed Dorcas Dulcimer, the daughter of moderately rich parents, as she was at nineteen. Then, in those far-off days, she had held dreams of adventure and high personal contacts. The first year she was out the dreams had focused on a handsome young diplomat, met at Newport. She had been dizzily in love—and yet, one year afterward, she had been married to Doré Van Hook, the richest young man in New York.

How had it come about? How could the parents with whom she had experienced only the usual slight contacts, for whom she had none of the affection based on real intimacy, been able so to impose their will upon her? The question, revealing her as merely a ceremonial ark borne onward in the triumphal march of those pilgrims of high society, her parents, had never been answered by her.

Realizing not one bit how it all happened, Dorcas Van Hook did realize that the personal equation was gone from her life. So she donned the curious constant smile and became a leader in society. Not only, too, was she a worker in the fold of purely social observances; she assumed all sorts of charitable and intellectual interests. Through all this, however, one felt that with her work was a mere narcotic, a something that drugged her into forgetting the keen issues of life she had missed.

It was during the beginning of Lent that Mrs. Van Hook, just finished with her most brilliant winter season and launched now on a huge bazaar for Finnish immigrants, gave Percival his christening. In this celebration Percival had the same meek part of Washington's Birthday or the Fourth of July. He was merely the excuse for the party.

"Miss Dillingham," said Mrs. Van Hook one morning, when holding her customary morning conference with her social secretary, "I wish you would see about getting Mrs. Knott Knutly's recipe for caudle. She served such delicious stuff when Becky was christened. I always thought ours had too much cinnamon."

"Very well," replied Miss Dillingham, conveying the sense that Percival was diverting too much attention from the Finnish Bazaar.

Mrs. Van Hook felt the rebuke.

"And don't forget," she called after the secretary, "to invite that Mrs. Sauter Korn Tassel, from Chicago, into tea some day. It ought to be worth"—with a sly look—"the five-thousand-dollar limousine we want to chance off at the Bazaar."

"She certainly is crazy to get in," remarked Miss Dillingham.

In her prompt consideration of the caudle Mrs. Doré Van Horn, with unerring maternal instinct, had gone straight to the heart of the affair. No child in Van Hook circles is, in fact, ever christened without caudle. That and the rare old Madeira, opened only at weddings and christenings in a phalarope household, are the outstanding features of this solemn occasion. And the selection of the recipe for this broth generally upsets the feelings of a few people in the household.

Mrs. Van Hook Assumed Charitable and Intellectual Interests That Drugged Her Into Forgetting the Keen Issues of Life She Had Missed

In this instance it was Coldstream, the English butler, who felt the slight. Looking over the Knott Knutly recipe, handed to him by Miss Dillingham, he was pierced at once by a sense of its deficiencies. "Too many cloves; too many cloves," muttered he sadly.

From his manner you received the impression that the Van Hooks had much better have trusted him—Coldstream—in the construction of such an essentially British beverage as caudle.

Only a disrespectful reference to the Thames or to his cherished recipe for claret cup could have so ruffled Coldstream's feelings.

However, the Knott Knutly recipe went through. So did two hundred dollars' worth of floral decorations for the great Louis Quinze drawing-room on the second floor. So did the souvenirs for each of the forty guests, which—consisting of boxes of Royal Sèvres, rimmed in gold, marked with Percival's name and the date of the christening—had amounted to a total cost of two thousand dollars. So, finally, did Percival himself.

Carried down by Miss Rice—past the dignified Coldstream, through the two footmen, who, in white perukes and liveries of green, guarded the drawing-room door—the three-months-old hero of the occasion presented a stately front. His robe was of rose point lace over white silk and, ordered from abroad by the expensive little shop, had cost one thousand dollars. Purling down in cascades almost to the hem of the nurse's white uniform, it succeeded only in making more plaintive the bumpy little head, from which had been rubbed off the first crop of black hair. With round, dumb blue eyes the baby looked about him—through the great drawing-room at the forty fashionable guests; into the group made up of his father, mother, two little sisters and his grandmother, Mrs. Bellwether Dulcimer.

Perhaps it was this unprecedented consolidation of his family, or perhaps it was the intimation that this sort of thing would make up his whole future life; but at any rate Percival began to cry.

"*A la; à la; à la!*" howled he, and threatened to be snuffed out by the long, frightened gust of weeping.

It was only at the end of some minutes that he was sufficiently quiet to receive his name. In this he was helped out by T. Bagly Grab, the railroad magnate, and Mrs. Grab, his wife, who acted respectively as godfather and godmother. With this formidable cohort between him and the world, the flesh and the devil, Percival was taken back to the fourth floor to reflect on the advantages of his position.

Percival Finds Someone to Talk With

THE christening left the baby with more than a name. Through it he came into the embarrassed possession of seven porridge sets—gold, silver and china—of innumerable spoons, and of ten thousand dollars in money. This sum, placed to Percival's account in a bank, represented the desire of his relatives to see him get a little ahead in life.

After the christening Mr. and Mrs. Van Hook went to the Riviera and left Miss Finch and the children behind them. At the beginning of May the bereaved household took up its residence at Oaktops, the fine country estate on the Hudson. The first of July the phalarope parents alighted again near their brood, and the entire family then went to the villa at Newport. From Newport they returned to Oaktops for the fall months; and the first of December saw them all back again at the Fifth Avenue mansion.

Percival's real life, however, cannot be said to have started until two years later. By this time the infant's knowledge of another world—a knowledge that seemed to look out so surely from those big blue eyes—had given way to positive information about this. Already Percival knew what to expect from life. The monotonous white-clad figures of his two nurses; the half-buttoned, hovering air of Miss Finch; the airings in the big purring limousine; the pompous special-train movings from one house to another—who could think that things would ever be different? And then, just as life took on this orderly aspect, there came a surprise.

The surprise was Freda, the nurse who came to replace those monotonous white-clad figures of his first years. Freda had two funny, kind eyes, long and slanting, set far out on the corners of her cheeks. Her mouth was flat and wide, and when she smiled her whole face seemed to tumble out of place, just like blocks when you knock them down. From the moment he first laid eyes on her the small boy knew that here was a person not merely to talk at, but to talk with. And in all his world of punctual luxury Freda became the one living, breathing fact.

To be sure, his régime was now no less precise than before. At seven he had a bath; at eight he partook, together with his two sisters, Miss Finch and the governesses, of a breakfast of cereal, bread and milk, served by the liveried Tompkins; at nine Freda took him to see his mother; at half past nine Freda took him out to the Park; at eleven he was brought home for a nap; at twelve he and Freda again appeared in the children's dining room for a dinner of milk, bread and butter, vegetables and cooked fruit; at two came another nap; at three another outing; at five, a supper of milk, bread and fruit; and at six-thirty, bed.

It was a monotonous chain of days; but the little nurse strung it with marvelous plays and fairy tales. Most of these latter had come from her Russian mother, and one in particular swept the little captive rich boy out into a new and wind-swept world.

(Continued on Page 30)

MRS. NEMESIS

By William J. Neidig

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY RALEIGH

HIS name was Brand Dawson; but he had registered at the Whitefield Hotel as D. Brand.

A man assuming a false name usually does so from reasons of timidity—a thief may fear capture; or a spy, recognition; or a philanthropist, requests for money; or a bridegroom, a charivari; or a strike breaker, a brick. In Brand's case a timid bachelor hoped by changing his name to escape the notice of a woman. He was obliged to pass through Whitefield, Mrs. Lillie's town, and did not wish her to know it; not that he feared she would bother him—they were hardly well enough acquainted for that. But she might feel hurt. He was afraid of bruising her feelings. Timid bachelors are sometimes like that.

Brand registered boldly, demanded the best room in the house, received the only room left, arranged for a call, and followed his Oxford bag up the narrow stairway. The window opened upon an air well; the room had no running water. But he was able to get a tub bath in the bathroom next door, and before long he was asleep.

He was awakened at six o'clock by a knocking at his door. Rising, he pushed upon the white button for light. He planned to have breakfast at half past. The stage for Byrne left at seven.

There was no response—the room remained dark. The Whitefield Light Station operated only between dusk and midnight. Eventually he discovered that a lamp had been placed outside his door; and by adding its light to that from the window he succeeded in grooming himself. He then hurriedly packed his Oxford bag, placing two small, rather heavy, longish canvas sacks, tightly tied with whipcord, at the bottom, and his automatic pistol at the top. By the time he reached the dining room it was a quarter to seven. He stayed only long enough for coffee and toast, and then set out for the post office.

The object of Brand's quest—the Byrne stage—was a light mail wagon, which left Whitefield on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, returning on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Simmons, the Byrne carrier, had added a top made out of four oaken hoops and some canvas, now partly lifted.

"No, sir," he would say; "she's not a prairie schooner. She's a sand skimmer."

The sand skimmer had only one seat—that used by the driver; so that when more than one passenger rode the route the boxes and mail pouches stowed behind had to be rearranged and a seat added—a difficult proceeding at best, and made more so by the low top. As his mules were small, and the wheels had extremely narrow tires which sank deeply into the sand like French heels, Simmons sometimes refused to add to his load.

"Next trip," he would say. "I'm full-up to-day."

Upon this Friday morning Simmons arrived at the post office promptly at six, tied his mules, and proceeded to sort out his box mail into small bags; these he would later drop into the ranch boxes along the way. Leaving the post office he began upon his duties as purchasing agent.

He bought a white voile waist, convertible collar, organdie cuffs, thirty-six bust, price $1.25, for Miss Benton; five yards of shadow camisole lace, $1.10, for Mrs. Weaver; a gingham house dress, chambray collar, forty bust, $1.00, for Mrs. Harry Edwards; two ten-pound sacks of granulated sugar, $1.86, for Old Man Krause; a fifteen-pound pail of Golden Gleam coffee, $4.50, for the Harris-Bain Outfit—and so on through marrowfat peas, baking soda, soap, tobacco, aluminum kettles, and everything else that man or his civilized wife desires, with the one exception of intoxicating liquors, which are barred from transportation by the mail service.

The first passenger to arrive was a girl—a small, clear-eyed young woman of twenty-two whom the carrier found awaiting him at Grove's Grocery. Simmons instantly discovered that this young woman had a winning way of making a request which was hard to refuse. It was not that she was unusually pretty—he had odd notions about beauty. It was her smile, her voice, her sweetness, her tingling magnetism, her appealing smallness, her daintiness, her girlish claim upon his weather-beaten strength—he did not know what.

"I want to ride through to Byrne with you—if you'll take me," she said. "I'm Clara Rivers."

Simmons plucked at the wrinkles in his forehead. He had two passengers booked already, and room for only one. She made the third.

"I'm going on through," she continued. "I'll get someone to drive me across and then take the stage south at Tate's. I have a school near Wallace Post Office. I have to go this way because school begins Monday and the other stage doesn't come north until Monday."

She was only a little thing, and a stranger. This was Friday. As she said, the other stage could not be caught on a Saturday from the south. What could he do? He did what any man would do—the only thing possible: told her to get in on the front seat. Then he mentally shrugged his shoulders and continued his shopping.

When Carrier Simmons accepted Clara Rivers as a passenger he knew well enough that young Mrs. Lillie was expecting to ride out with him that morning. There was a man too. However, if people were so lazy that they lay abed until he was loaded—that was their affair. He saw the girl into the left end of his seat and then went into the hardware store. Thus, when his second passenger arrived she found the one seat in the possession of a pretty stranger, and no Simmons in sight.

Now the young woman in possession was as sweet-tempered a pretty girl as will be found in fifty counties. She was not cross in the morning. She did not speak caustically to her father. She did not quarrel with her sister, or scold her little brother, or nag her mother, or gossip; nor did she hate anyone.

The newcomer also. Mrs. Lillie was almost as young as Clara, and in her dark way brilliantly beautiful. She could afford to be sunny-tempered, and was.

Why, then, did these two gentle ladies, the moment they saw each other, feel a moving desire to scratch each other's faces and pull out each other's hair? Not literally to scratch and pull; but each instantly felt an intense dislike for the other, and each surprised herself by words she would not have dreamed possible.

"Oh, yes!" began Mrs. Lillie sweetly.

Clara's quills went up at the mere tone of her voice.

"Are you looking for the driver? He went into the hardware store."

"Only to have him ask you to find another seat."

"Is this Mrs. Simmons?"

"No, dear. There isn't any."

"I'm so glad—really! He seemed like a kind man."

"Yes; but I doubt if he's susceptible."

"I suppose you must have reasons for doubting it."

"Knowing the many really pretty and charming girls who have sat where you are sitting—yes."

"I hadn't suspected!"

"As to the seat—I have had it engaged for three days."

"But, of course, you didn't engage it of me."

"Oh, very well! Wait and see!"

Mrs. Lillie had not quite intended making a scene, but she could not allow herself to be put down by another woman like that. She thereupon stepped forward, stowed away her own suitcase in a niche partly occupied by mail pouches, and boldly clambered aboard. She did not, however, attempt to eject the smaller woman, as an onlooker might have believed she meant to do. She merely appropriated Simmons' end of the seat. She told herself that she believed in backing up her words with deeds.

Simmons found her so, her gray skirts gathered about her trim ankles, defiance in her eyes.

"But where do I get off at, Mrs. Lillie? You can't set there. That seat's the driver's seat."

"Perhaps I can't; but I'm doing it."

"How can I drive?"

"Get that young woman to give me my own seat and you shall have yours. Otherwise not."

The Byrne carrier again plucked at the wrinkles in his forehead, which were deeper now than before.

"I'll tell you what," he said. "I'll move them boxes for'ard a little bit, and pile some of them empty sacks on top, and build a seat in behind for you."

"I'll not sit on a box and I'll not ride backward," said Mrs. Lillie firmly. "Under no conditions!"

"One of you'll have to. I can't drive the United States mail setting overhead on the canvas."

Clara looked at Simmons' rueful face and laughed.

"Why, I don't mind riding backward! I'll sit behind!"

"That will be more sensible," said Mrs. Lillie.

Clara climbed down, Mrs. Lillie moved over into the place she had vacated, and Simmons began shifting boxes and sacks until he had rigged up a jury seat in the rear. Then he roped the load in place to prevent its shifting. Clara found the new seat unexpectedly comfortable.

"This is going to be fun!" she cried. "I feel like the cookstove on moving day! Or, sometimes, the mattress!"

But Mrs. Lillie only sniffed. She should have looked round before she sniffed. Had she done so, she would have seen a third prospective passenger, Brand Dawson, hurrying down the street. Not that it could have made much difference. The time for knowledge was six minutes earlier, while the choice of riding backward was still open.

Brand arrived as the carrier was stowing the last of his freight, prior to casting off his lines. He noted the woman passenger on the front seat, but as she sat with her back toward him did not recognize her. He noted the milk cans and boxes and mail pouches behind, and the jury-rigged seat in the rear, with its woman occupant. Then the woman occupant looked up, and

Mrs. Lillie Stood It Better Than She Would Have Done Had She Not Sat With Her Back to Them

he noted—a startling thing to say of a timid man—that she had blue eyes. After that he hardly knew what he noted. He only knew that he intended to travel by that Byrne stage if he had to buy it.

■

BRAND'S acquaintance with Mrs. Lillie dated from six or eight months before, at an Omaha hotel. She had seen him in the dining room at breakfast. He had seen her, also, if the truth be told; but as he was not a salesman the fact is unimportant.

Now Mrs. Lillie was not a flirt; nor was she bold. She had never done such a thing before. And yet, a chance position near the desk when he called for his mail, a quick eye for his box, a casual glance at the hotel register to follow—and she knew his name. She had tarried to read a letter. Before she passed on she had learned further facts also. He was an important man. Among his correspondence was a note from the Executive Mansion. He was a man of decision. A message in his box calling for a reply, he wrote a telegram on the spot and had the clerk get it on the wire. He was considerate of subordinates. A maid had spilled water on some of his papers, and the clerk was apologizing.

"The papers were of no importance," he said. "I'm sorry she feels badly about it."

Considerate, a man of decision, and important!

They were introduced by a mutual friend that same day. Mrs. Lillie was warned that Brand was excessively shy. Brand was told that she was a business woman, with no sentiment about her. She had come to the city to market a shipment of feeders from her ranch in the Sand Hills. He was not told that she was as young as she looked or that she was as charming as she was beautiful. All married women are charming. The power over men gained through experience is one of the rewards of married life—or is said to be. Mrs. Lillie was young and a widow; and widows never forget—or are said not to.

After that they met several times and became rather well acquainted. Mrs. Lillie was careful not to frighten him. Brand tried to be careful to talk only about man subjects. Before they separated he took her address. She lived south of Whitefield, she told him. For some reason she did not tell him that she actually lived at Byrne, forty-five miles south of Whitefield, or that she was postmistress there. Since then they had exchanged two or three letters.

A business woman! Mrs. Lillie would have bitten her lip to know how literally Brand regarded her as such. However, her affair with Brand was hopeless from the beginning. She was undeniably beautiful. Brand was a bachelor and unattached. But she was dark, whereas he ardently admired fair women. And she was tall—almost as tall as he was. Nature guides her creatures with a deft hand. If most tall men since Adam had been attracted by tall women, and most petite women by small men, the human race by now would consist of two tribes of savages—one forty feet high and still growing; the other knee-high to a shoe.

"You can see," said Simmons, indicating. "I'm full-up a'ready. Two passengers a'ready."

"Both women!" said the timid man.

"I know that."

"And sitting back to back. What's one man more or less in a wagonload of women sitting back to back?"

In the Sand Hills they like to say that the purpose of the sand is to sharpen something—your teeth, or your eyesight, or your sense of humor. Simmons looked at Brand with more interest.

"You'd sink my sand skimmer rim-deep the minute I hit the hills. Then what would my poor mules do?"

"Not rim-deep! Besides, you can make it up to the mules by driving slower."

"Can't nobody drive no slower than I do now."

"Tell you what—I'll get out if I sink you in rim-deep."

"No place I could put you," said the carrier.

"Oh, lay me crosswise back of the seat!"

"Yes—crosswise. How'd you look laying crosswise over them two milk cans?"

"Me? Want to know? I'll show you!"

And he made as if to climb past Clara into the wagon. Timid? He? Brand Dawson?

"Good morning, Mr. Dawson," called Mrs. Lillie, turning.

Brand felt the blood surging into his face. Mrs. Lillie! Five minutes earlier he would have been glad to see her. But now!

"Oh, good morning!" he replied lamely.

"I'll Have Nothing to Do With You! She Wouldn't; and My House is as Respectable as Hers"

"You can't do it—don't try," said Simmons. "You're too heavy. You'd bend the tin. And you're too tall. You'd stick. Or else you'd catch your toes in the spokes of the wheel and break something."

His conceits pleased him so much that he made a concession.

"If the young lady, now, would move over—there's plenty of room sideways. Then, if you could fold yourself up a little ——"

Clara was looking at him again.

"I'm good at that!" said Brand, brushing aside all thought of Mrs. Lillie.

"Is that room enough?" asked the girl of Simmons.

Brand snatched his reply from his mouth.

"More than enough!"

Raising his grip past Clara's head, he placed it inside the canopy. Then he settled himself into his place beside her, and a new chapter in his life had begun. He forgot that he was shy about women. He forgot everything except that he was where he desired to be.

But Mrs. Lillie, on the front seat, was gritting her pretty teeth at the unlovely trick Fortune had played her.

The girl who had raised her eyes so that Brand Dawson could look into them was wearing a white sailor straw hat, a shirt-waist suit of white duck, and white shoes. When she removed her hat—the brim rubbed against the canvas side of the wagontop after she moved over—her hair seemed to gleam with light, as if it were burnished clouds touched by morning. Her features glowed as though they were translucent—he expressed his impressions so—with her soul shining through. Her blue eyes were clear and deep—oh, like the sky, or a glacial lake! She had an uptilted nose; a small, mobile mouth, bordered at the ends with dimples; small, even teeth. She had delicately formed wrists and arms—girlishly soft, yet firm, like those of a woman. And, though she was only a little thing, her lithe body was as perfectly molded as that of any Venus. Brand noted with reverential admiration, as he seated himself beside her, that the top of her head, glorious hair and all, lay entirely below the level of his eyes.

After that, of what avail young Mrs. Lillie's dark and stately beauty?

Brand had the sense to wait for a few minutes before speaking to the girl squeezed in beside him. He seemed to know that she was weighing a problem. When he did speak it was with inspired directness.

"How am I to talk to you?" he asked. "Must I get introduced, or will the fellowship of the road be sufficient?"

She considered the matter carefully. This was her first journey of any length. Her father had warned her of the danger of talking with strange men on the trains; she had been obliged to snub her fifth flirt only the day before. This situation was different from that one, however. The man was different also—of a different type, and more intelligent; his face was stronger; his eyes were clearer; he was more respectful. Ought she to snub him? It might be awkward to snub a man who was squeezed in with one for a ten hours' pull through the sand. Besides, she would rather like to hear what he would say.

He had not asked whether he might talk to her, but how he was to talk to her. Certainly she could not permit what he called the fellowship of the road to serve. He would have to be presented properly.

"An introduction, I think," she decided, a little primly.

He had expected that, and was ready. He seemed to know, whether because he had a sensitive instinct or a sister, that at twenty-two a girl of careful training would be desirous of observing all the social forms without respect to circumstances. He turned to Simmons, under the plea that he did not know her name, made his request, and was duly presented.

"I took a long breath before I sat down," he said. "What shall I talk about?"

"Was that what made you so late?"

"I was late because I wanted to ride back here among my friends."

The inflection of his voice showed her that he meant the remark to be humorous, and not impertinent. It implied a recognition of the fact that she had noticed he was acquainted with the other woman. It contained other implications also, but not offensive ones.

Thus the acquaintance began. During the next half hour Brand told her he expected to spend the night at Byrne; after that he did not know. She told him about her school at Wallace. The place was only a post office now, but Mr. Ames was hoping to sell some of his land to the Government for an experiment station; and if he did the railroad would probably be extended through, and there would be a town. Mr. Ames was president of the school board. She planned to stay at Tate's overnight.

"I'll get the man at Byrne to drive me across this evening. It's only five miles."

"I might go halves on the team and stay at Tate's myself."

But she was not enthusiastic about the suggestion. She knew the country districts better than he did. Manners and morals are still very closely related in some parts of the world. Arriving together publicly by stage was one thing; arriving together privately by team late at night was another.

"I remember," she said, speaking a little carefully—"I remember an instance on our farm. Two strangers, a man and a girl, drove up one night about two o'clock and asked for shelter. They had some excuse for being out alone like that—a bridge washed out, or something—and my father made room for them and gave them breakfast next morning; but he kept us children away from them as if they were wicked. I've never forgotten."

"People can't be too careful of appearances," replied Brand. "You and I would have the driver with us."

But she was firm about the matter. Her father had made her promise never to get herself into a position that would require explanations. As Brand's personal philosophy of action was not greatly different—if shyness with respect to women may be called philosophy—he agreed with her.

He had not thought about the explanations. Clara was pleased to find that they were so closely in accord.

Time passed. The sand skimmer trudged sturdily southward. Other subjects came up, many of them, as the acquaintance progressed. Their work. Clara told him about her last school, which was also her first. Brand was less definite: one moment he spoke as if he were a professional man of some kind, the next as if he were a farmer. He was sunburned; his hands were rough; he might well have been a farmer. And yet he did not dress like a farmer or talk like one. A professional man turned farmer perhaps.

They became so well acquainted that they told each other about their families—Clara's sister and her younger brother, her father and her mother; Brand's mother and his sister.

By the end of the first hour Brand felt that he was better acquainted with Clara Rivers than with all the other girls he had ever known rolled into one. By the end of the second, Clara discovered that the more they said to each other, the more they had to say. By the end of the third, each was smiling frankly into the other's eyes, too happy to care how much they had to say or how well they were acquainted.

Later still—and the fact is its own commentary—they found themselves listening to their ideas about friendship, life and love, marriage, the relation of man and woman.

"True love always implies perfect sympathy," thought Clara.

"Misunderstandings that are avoidable endanger the finest love," asserted Brand with the positiveness of an expert. "Some women will treat a man badly in order to increase his love for her; and some men, a woman. Passion is like an oil fire—the more water you pour on it, the hotter it burns. But spiritual love is like a bed of glowing coals—it can be blown until it will melt steel; and yet a little water will put it out."

"You would not call just obstacles water?"

"By no means! For instance, such obstacles as ——"

"As ——"

"It's absurd; but suppose! Suppose I was in love with—well, a girl on this sand skimmer ——"

"That is absurd, as you say."

"—— and the driver should raise difficulties about my riding. I should overcome them. But if the girl ——"

It will be observed that they were making progress.

Mrs. Lillie was not blind to their growing friendship, and tried now and then to wade out to their boat.

She was not good at that sort of thing, however. She would turn in her seat and ask Mr. Dawson if he had been in Omaha since she saw him last, or if he had noticed the wonderful sweet clover along the road.

"Obstacles!" he would whisper to Clara. "Wonderful indeed!" he would reply to Mrs. Lillie.

"How fertile the soil is through here!" she remarked at a vigorous field of corn.

"Valentine sand," he said absent-mindedly.

"Like the soil round Byrne."

"I don't think so. Valentine sand doesn't run that far south. The Byrne soil is probably Gannett sand."

"I've never heard of more than the one kind."

"There are other kinds, still, in the Sand Hills."

"How interesting—to know the Sand Man!"

"Isn't it!" cried Clara.

Mrs. Lillie stood it better than she would have done had she not sat with her back to them. Nevertheless, emotions quite foreign to her gentle nature were beginning to surge up within her. At the end of the third hour she addressed herself to Clara:

"I feel very selfish, my dear—monopolizing this comfortable seat. Let me exchange places with you for a while."

"Thank you," replied the girl sweetly. "It isn't worth the bother. I get off at the end of the line."

"Oh, but I must insist!"

"I'm very comfortable here, thank you."

"Mr. Dawson, make her take care of herself!"

"I think she's probably comfortable here. This seat is easier than it looks."

When she found she couldn't make that exchange she turned to another that was still more hopeless, as people often do when emotionally unsettled.

"Stay over and get a good night's rest at Byrne!" Brand was saying to Clara. "They'll drive you to Tate's in the morning."

But Mrs. Lillie was again interrupting them:

"Mr. Dawson, I'm tired of riding in front. Please exchange with me for a little while!"

Brand ought to have humored her as a matter of friendship. But he was in the midst of an emotional reaction himself—that of anger. He resented her attempts to separate him from Clara. And he was not a psychologist; he failed to read the danger signals.

"I would in a minute," he said, looking at her with hard eyes, "but I'm holding back the load from crushing Miss Rivers."

Mrs. Lillie's emotions underwent a quick sea change. If what Brand felt was anger, that which Mrs. Lillie now experienced was nothing short of murderous fury. No one would have suspected the turmoil beneath the surface from her manner, however. That was one of amused tolerance.

"Are you, indeed?"

How it had been managed neither quite knew. Shortly before noon they reached the halfway post office of Black Lake, where they had dinner and Simmons put in fresh mules. As the two rear passengers walked back to take their places, they were greeted by a laugh, of what they took to be pleased triumph. Mrs. Lillie had quietly taken possession of the seat previously occupied by the girl.

"Try the better seat, my dear," she said. "Turn about is fair play for a hard seat like this."

And nothing could move her. Clara was obliged to sit with the driver whether she would or she wouldn't. And Brand was obliged to sit with Mrs. Lillie.

"Stranger, I Ain't for Sale; and My Mush Ain't for Sale; and My Team Ain't for Sale!"

Mrs. Lillie had never looked more lovely than when she smiled into Brand's smoky eyes as the sand skimmer resumed its march. And she had never seemed—such is the guile of women—more unobtrusively kindly. The mistakes of the morning had fallen quite away.

"I like the Sand Hills," she would say, "because they are so young and so clean."

"They are, indeed!" he would reply absently. Then, turning to Clara: "How are you making out, Miss Rivers?"

"I'm too light for a spring seat. I'm always sliding downhill. How are you?"

"Oh, I'm still overcoming obstacles!"

The reply would be some nonsense, and they would both laugh, deeming the allusion a secret between themselves.

"Is this your first visit to the Sand Hills?" Mrs. Lillie would then ask patiently.

"My first this far west."

"How far south are you going?"

"I stop at Byrne to-night. After that I can't say."

"Oh, Mr. Sand Man!" Clara would cry. "Mallard ducks!"

"Don't you wish you had a gun?"

"I can't shoot; but I wish you had."

"I have a pistol in my grip."

"I have a pistol in mine too," said Mrs. Lillie smoothly. "And I can shoot!"

But both the tenseness and substance of the remark went unnoticed among the echoes from the heights. Brand's voice, Clara's voice—neither Brand nor Clara heard any other sound, except inattentively.

"And Miss Rivers? Does she stop at Byrne to-night also?"

"I believe she does."

"Supper and breakfast also?"

"Oh, certainly!"

"I'm told they have a good cook at Byrne."

And Brand, turning:

"Did you hear that, Miss Rivers? They have a good cook at Byrne!"

"I hope they have a good team," said Clara.

"They have," was Mrs. Lillie's calm reply. "Excellent beds, a good cook and good horses."

The seven gates of friendship are not to be forced, of course. Mrs. Lillie made a few further attempts to engage Brand's attention, concealing her gulping hatred behind her pleasantest manner. Then, for a while, she sat silent. No one would have guessed from her face the volcano in her heart—a man least of all. Clara might have guessed it had she taken the trouble. What is it that is said about "a woman scorned"?

Mrs. Lillie retained her seat beside Brand for five or six miles; then, as suddenly as she had made the exchange, she asked for a return to the seating of the morning.

"You are rested, my dear, by now. Suppose we trade back."

"Indeed, yes," assented Clara.

And that seemed the end of that episode.

III

IT WAS growing dark. They had been waiting nearly an hour. Not only had the owner not appeared but the house was strangely quiet.

"You might wait here while I look up the cook," Mrs. Lillie had said courteously. "This room is Byrne Post Office."

She had left by an inner door. How were they to know that she owned the place—boards, glass and shingles?

Brand now determined to investigate. Crossing to the door leading into the residence part of the house, he knocked loudly. When there was no answer he knocked again.

His third summons was peremptory. This time he had a response; Mrs. Lillie appeared in the doorway. That dark young beauty had doffed her hat and exchanged her gray tailor-made for a house gown of some distinction.

"I think I should like to speak with the owner," said Brand—"the owner of this house."

Mrs. Lillie regarded him thoughtfully, even watchfully—almost as a cat might regard a mouse when about to play with it. For a moment she did not reply. When at last she spoke her voice had a dry ring to it that he did not recognize:

"Why—I am understood to be the owner. This is my home."

The words, taken in connection with the memories of his reckless jilting on the way out, gave him what can only be called an emotional collapse. He tried not to look at Clara, but could not help himself, even with Mrs. Lillie watching. That she had noticed his accession of shyness he knew; she seemed to be inwardly amused. He quite forgot what he desired to say to the owner of the house. It was Clara who first recovered her self-possession.

"Mr. Dawson was about to ask concerning supper," she said; "not that it makes any great difference, but if convenient ——"

Mrs. Lillie remained very calm, very remote, and yet watchfully interested and expectant.

"Supper, I'm afraid, is out of the question. The day has been quite warm, and my cook refuses to turn her hand over further."

"Something cold," suggested Brand as ideas began to snap back into place. "A mere bite of anything you have."

It must be said in his favor that he was thinking of Clara's needs, not of his own.

"Impracticable. I'm sorry."

Mrs. Lillie stood waiting, malice in her eyes. A sad thing to say; but, beautiful though she was, she was gloating over the writhings of the two worms in the dust at her feet as keenly as any picture-book devil over the writhings of unarmored souls. A philosopher seeing her in some misogynistic moment might have reflected that beautiful women are only superwomen after all.

"I don't mind for myself; but Miss Rivers ——"

A sudden disturbing doubt rose in his mind as he watched Mrs. Lillie's expression. More of his ideas had snapped back. He knew he had not treated her well—he had been rude to her; but, confound it, was she intending to take revenge by denying a tired and hungry girl her supper? Was she really so childish as that?

The doubt that rose in Brand's mind was as nothing to that which surged in upon Clara. She had suspected since Mrs. Lillie first spoke. Now she understood. A most delicate and complete revenge! The scorned beauty intended to turn her, Clara Rivers, out of doors! Alone, at night, with a man! A man she had met only that morning! And in an uninhabited country!

Poor primmest pretty girl! Poor timidest man!

"Anyhow, you will give us shelter," Brand was saying.

"I'm afraid not to-night."

"But—Miss Rivers?"

"Even Miss Rivers."

"Haven't you the room?"

"Oh, yes!"

Brand was losing his judgment, as Mrs. Lillie had done during the morning.

"I've offended you. Very well. I'm willing to accept punishment. I'll find shelter somewhere, somehow. But don't take it out on the girl. A bed for her at least ——"

"Neither of you. I'm sorry."

"Then rent me a team for a five-mile drive at your own price!"

"Not even that," she replied sweetly. "The men are too tired and the horses are too tired."

Brand again looked over at Clara. The panic in her eyes caused him to see red.

"Would you mind telling me why you refuse to shelter us?"

Mrs. Lillie became almost happy.

"You and this young woman?"

"Both or either!"

"Are you married?" she asked.

He did not see the full insolence she was intending.

"Me? Why ——"

"You and this woman? You two?"

Clara had already turned away, sick with shame—anything to escape meeting his eye. It was going to be worse even than she feared.

"You know we are not," he replied, puzzled.

Mrs. Lillie allowed herself to smile upon him—a sad, almost affectionate smile.

"Try Jimmy O'Hara, two miles northwest. He doesn't know you. He might take you in or drive you across—either one. Anyhow, he's the nearest. Follow the road."

"But why, Mrs. Lillie?"

"My house is a respectable house. That's why!"

Brand looked at her in amazement.

"If you were a man," he said finally, "I'd knock you down!"

"Ah!" she replied. "If I had been a man I should have knocked you down hours ago!"

IV

JIMMY O'HARA turned up the wick of his kerosene stove, put on the skillet, and spaded in another dab of lard; then he slid off the two remaining slices of cold cornmeal mush from a pan in the cupboard in such a manner as not to spatter the hot grease. After a while he cautiously lifted one corner of one of the slices. Not brown enough. A one-burner stove is not a rapid producer. Another period of patience and he turned them over. The smell was delicious. He could hardly wait until they were done through.

This was not the beginning of his supper, but the end of it. He had put in a hard day: three hours on rake and mower; at half past seven, cutting; at noon, grain for his horses, fried mush for himself; then cutting again, until his horses were almost too tired to lift their feet from the fresh thatch; then the chores. For supper he had made himself a big pot of coffee and fried himself more mush. The two slices emptied the pan.

Jimmy lived in an unplastered board house of one room. His furniture consisted of a cob pipe; a rusty hay-burning camel-lip stove, for winter; a homemade bed; a pine table, upon which stood a kerosene lamp; one chair; a cupboard; a washpan and its stand; a water pail and its stand; and innumerable eight-penny nails in the walls, from which hung articles not suitable to be laid on the floor. The cupboard and stands were merely converted shipping boxes. The bed had been constructed out of crisscrossed barbed wire, heavily overlaid with hay, on which two worn-out comforters had been spread. Its linen consisted of a pair of gray blankets. Sheets and pillow slips were refinements that required too much washing.

"You Wouldn't Shoot Me, Girlie! I'm Yer Friend! I Got a Right Here"

When its color suited him he fished out the browned mush upon his tin dinner plate, ran off the surplus grease into the lard can, placed the skillet back over the flame to burn clean, and seated himself. Then he reached for the molasses can. After a little he had eaten this mush also.

He was now too crop-full and tired to wash dishes; and besides, he would have to use them the first thing in the morning again. He therefore placed his sticky tin plate, knife and fork back in the box cupboard unwashed. The smoking skillet he hung against the wall behind the oil stove. The pan that had contained mush he filled with water. A little later he expected to stir up another batch of mush for frying the next day.

Then he got out his pipe and tilted himself back in his chair, heels on table, for a smoke.

For the first half mile Brand and Clara were painfully self-conscious. The instinct and training that had led Clara to demand an introduction now led her to walk with averted eyes. Brand had been shocked back into unfathomable depths of shyness. Bad enough for two men to be caught out like that. But a man and a woman! A man and a woman, alone at night in the heart of the Sand Hills, tired, lost, with no food and no shelter—and not married! However, there they were.

The two miles to Jimmy O'Hara's house proved to be more than three. After a while the shame-stricken two tacitly agreed to ignore their situation and begin talking together again, as before. The road was not an easy one to walk. Clara's shoes were not such as she would have chosen for a tramp through sand. Brand's two gripe tired his fingers; he was obliged to rig up a yoke out of many thicknesses of whipcord, so as to shift the burden to his shoulders. Physical discomfort takes precedence over mental.

"Set my suitcase down, Mr. Sand Man. I'll have them drive over this way in the morning for it."

Brand laughed at her.

"I hope Mrs. Nemesis will choke on her supper!" she added inconsequently.

"Tired?"

"A little. It's the Gannett sand, I think."

"This you are now walking in is dune sand," he told her. "I wish it was Gannett sand."

Except for the stars there was no light. In the valleys the road was faint and overgrown with marsh grass. In the hills the wind had cut away the footing. After a while the moon appeared, making progress easier. They came at last to O'Hara's gate and, after passing round the barn, saw the watering trough and pump, and the light in the house.

Brand soon had the pump running cold water. They were both very thirsty. The water could not have tasted better had Jimmy's rusted tin dipper been a crystal chalice or the old oaken bucket itself. After they had drunk they approached the house.

Jimmy O'Hara, his pipe in his mouth, peered out past the edge of the door in response to their knock.

"Where is the O'Hara place?" asked Brand.

"Right here. This is that place."

Jimmy slipped himself through the opening, closing the door quickly behind him.

Brand had the barest glimpse of the interior.

"Then you are the man we're looking for. Mrs. Lillie thought you might give us a bite of supper and shelter for the night, and in the morning drive us over to Tate's."

By now the moonlight was bright enough to show the consternation on the Irishman's face.

"Mrs. Lillie sent you to me?"

"That's it. We came in by stage from Whitefield."

"And she wouldn't put you up?"

"That's it. She hadn't room, she said."

Brand was referring to Mrs. Lillie as naturally as he would have referred to a cyclone or a fire. His mental discomfort had somehow quite passed away.

"Supper, nor nothing?"

"Wouldn't bend her little finger for us. For myself it doesn't matter; but if you and Mrs. O'Hara could manage to take care of Miss Rivers somehow — "

"Both of us," said Clara. "I can sleep almost anywhere. You will, won't you?"

Clara was standing unashamed beside Brand. She, also, had become strangely reconciled to their situation.

"Mrs. Lillie tell you I had a wife?"

"Haven't you?" asked Brand quickly.

"Not a wife! I got one room and one bed and one pillow."

"Then what did she mean—sending us here?"

"She knows. I don't. She could 'a' put you up. I can't. You ought to 'a' stayed back there with her."

"Anyhow, you can give us some supper; and after that ——"

Now it was the suggestion of supper that had thrown Jimmy O'Hara into a panic in the first instance. The picture of his domestic arrangements had risen vividly before his eyes—the burned-out skillet; the sticky tin plate; the unwashed knife and fork. Even had they been washed, he owned only the one set. The room also. He would have died before exposing his bachelor economies to a woman as dainty as this one.

"I'm all out of everything," he lied bravely. "All out of everything!"

"A cup of coffee ——"

"All out of coffee and everything. Won't have no more until Simmons passes to-morrow."

"A glass of milk and some bread for this lady? Anything!"

"I haven't nothing for you."

(Continued on Page 43)

AMERICAN HORSES

By Melville Davisson Post

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT McCAIG

"You Look Mighty Young, But Perhaps You Know Your Business. At Any Rate, It's the Best I Can Do. Get In"

THE thing began in the colony room of the Empire Club in London. The colony room is on the second floor and looks out over Piccadilly Circus. It was at an hour when nobody is in an English club, about eight o'clock. There was a drift of dirty fog outside. Such nights come along in October.

Douglas Hargrave did not see the big Baronet until he closed the door behind him. Sir James was seated at a table, leaning over, his face between his hands, and his elbows resting on the polished mahogany board. There was a sheet of paper on the table between the Baronet's elbows. There were a few lines written on the paper and the man's whole faculties were concentrated on them. He did not see the jewel dealer until that person was half across the room, then he called to him.

"Hello, Hargrave," he said. "Do you know anything about ciphers?"

"Only the trade one that our firm uses," replied the jewel dealer. "And that's a modification of the A B C code."

"Well," he said, "take a look at this."

The jewel dealer sat down at the other side of the table and the Baronet handed him the sheet of paper. The man expected to see a lot of queer signs and figures; but instead he found a simple trade's message, as it seemed to him.

P. L. A. shipped nine hundred horses on freight steamer Don Carlos from N. Y.
Have the bill of lading handed over to our agent to check up.

"Well," said the jewel dealer, "somebody's going to ship nine hundred horses. Where's the mystery?"

The Baronet shrugged his big shoulders.

"The mystery," he said, "is everywhere. It's before and after and in the body of this message. There's hardly anything to it but mystery."

"Who sent it?" said Hargrave.

"That's one of the mysteries," replied the Baronet.

"Ah!" said the jewel dealer. "Who received it?"

"That's another," he answered.

"At any rate," continued Hargrave, "you know where you got it."

"Right!" replied the Baronet. "I know where I got it." He took three newspapers out of the pocket of his big tweed coat. "There it is," he said, "in the personal column of three newspapers—to-day's Times printed in London; the Matin printed in Paris; and a Dutch daily printed in Amsterdam."

And there was the message set up in English, in two sentences precisely word for word, in the three newspapers printed on the same day in London, Paris and Amsterdam.

"It seems to be a message all right," said Hargrave. "But why do you imagine it's a cipher?"

The Baronet looked closely at the American jewel dealer for a moment.

"Why should it be printed in English in these foreign papers," he said, "if it were not a cipher?"

"Perhaps," said Hargrave, "the person for whom it's intended does not know any other language."

The Baronet shrugged his shoulders.

"The persons for whom this message is intended," he said, "do not confine themselves to a single language. It's a pretty well-organized international concern."

"Well," said Hargrave, "it doesn't look like a mystery that ought to puzzle the ingenuity of the chief of the Criminal Investigation Department of the metropolitan police." He nodded to Sir James. "You have only to look out for the arrival of nine hundred horses and when they get in to see who takes them off the boat. The thing looks easy."

"It's not so easy as it looks," replied the Baronet. "Evidently these horses might go to France, Holland or England. That's the secret in this message. That's where the cipher comes in. The name of the port is in that cipher somewhere."

"But you can watch the steamer," said Hargrave, "the Don Carlos."

The Baronet laughed.

"There's no such steamer!" He got up and began to walk round the table. "Nine hundred horses," he said. "This thing has got to stop. They're on the sea now, on the way over from America. We have got to find out where they will go ashore."

He stopped, stooped over and studied the message which he had written out and which also lay before him in the three newspapers.

"It's there," he said, "the name of the port of arrival, somewhere in those two sentences. But I can't get at it. It's no cipher that I have ever heard of. It's no one of the hundred figure or number ciphers that the experts in the department know anything about. If we knew the port of arrival we could pick up the clever gentleman who comes to take away the horses. But what's the port—English, French or Dutch? There are a score of ports." He struck the paper with his hand. "It's there, my word for it, if we could only decipher the thing."

Then he stood up, his face lifted, his fingers linked behind his back. He crossed the room and stood looking out at the thin yellow fog drifting over Piccadilly Circus. Finally he came back, gathered up his papers and put them in the pocket of his big tweed coat.

"There's one man in Europe," he said, "who can read this thing. That's the Swiss expert criminologist, old Arnold, of Zurich. He's lecturing at the Sorbonne in Paris. I'm going to see him."

Then he went out.

Now that, as has been said, is how the thing began. It was the first episode in the series of events that began to go forward on this extraordinary night. One will say that the purchasing agent for a great New York jewel house ought to be accustomed to adventures. The writers of romance have stimulated that fancy. But the fact is that such persons are practical people. They never do any of the things that the story writers tell us. They never carry jewels about with them. Of course they know the police departments of foreign cities. All jewel dealers make a point of that. Hargrave's father was an old friend of Sir James McBain, chief of the C. I. D., and the young man always went to see him when he happened in London. That explains the freedom of his talk to Hargrave on this night in the Empire Club in Piccadilly.

The young man went over and sat down by the fire. The big room was empty. The sounds outside seemed muffled and distant. The incident that had just passed impressed him. He wondered why people should imagine that a purchasing agent of a jewel house must be a sort of expert in the devices of mystery. As has been said, the thing's a notion. Everything is shipped through reliable transportation companies and insured. There was much more mystery in a shipload of horses—the nine hundred horses that were galloping through the head of Sir James McBain—than in all the five prosaic years during which young Hargrave had succeeded his father as a jewel buyer. The American was impressed by this mystery of the nine hundred horses. Sir James had said it was a mystery in every direction.

Now as he sat alone before the fire in the colony room of the Empire Club and thought about it, the thing did seem inexplicable. Why should the metropolitan police care who imported horses, or in what port a shipload of them was landed? The war was over. Nobody was concerned about the importation of horses. Why should Sir James be so disturbed about it? But he was disturbed, and he had rushed off to Paris to see an expert on ciphers. That seemed a tremendous lot of trouble to take. The Baronet knew the horses were on the sea coming from America, he said. If he knew that much, how could he fail to discover the boat on which they were carried and the port at which they would arrive? Nobody could conceal nine hundred horses!

Hargrave was thinking about that, idly, before the glow of the coal fire, when the second episode in this extraordinary affair arrived.

A steward entered.

"Visitor, please," he said, "to see Mr. Hargrave."

Then he presented his tray with a card. The jewel dealer took the card with some surprise. Everybody knew that he was at the Empire Club. It is a colony thing with chambers for foreign guests. A list of arrivals is always printed. He saw at a glance that it was not a man's card; the size was too large. Then he turned it over before the light of the fire. The name was engraved in script, an American fashion at this time.

The woman's card had surprised him; but the name on it brought him up in his chair—"Mrs. A. B. Farmingham." It was not a name that he knew precisely; but he knew its genera, the family or group that it belonged in. Mr. Jefferson removed titles of nobility in the American republic, but his efforts did not eliminate caste zones. It only made the lines of cleavage more pronounced. One knew these zones by the name formation. Everybody knew "Alla Baba" Farmingham, as the Sunday Press was accustomed to translate his enigmatical initials. Some wonderful Western bonanza was behind the man. Mrs. "Alla Baba" Farmingham would be, then, one of the persons that Hargrave's house was concerned to reach. He looked again at the card. In the corner the engraved address, "Point View, Newport," was marked out with a pencil and "The Ritz" written over it.

He got his coat and hat and followed the steward out of the club. There was a carriage at the curb. A footman was holding the door open, and a woman, leaning over in the seat, was looking out. She was precisely what Hargrave expected to see, one of those dominant, impatient, aggressive women who force their way to the head of social affairs in America. She shot a volley of questions at him the moment he was before the door.

"Are you Douglas Hargrave, the purchasing agent for Bartholdi & Banks?"

The man said that he was, and at her service, and so forth. But she did not stop to listen to any reply.

"You look mighty young, but perhaps you know your business. At any rate, it's the best I can do. Get in."

Hargrave got in, the footman closed the door, and the carriage turned into Piccadilly Circus. The woman did not

pay very much attention to him. She made a laconic explanation, the sort of explanation one would make to a shopkeeper.

"I want your opinion on some jewels," she said. "I have a lot to do—no time to fool away. When I found that I could see the jewels to-night I concluded to pick you up on my way down. I didn't find out about it in time to let you know."

Hargrave told her that he would be very glad to give her the benefit of his experience.

"Glad, nonsense!" she said. "I'll pay your fee. Do you know a jewel when you see it?"

"I think I do, madam," he replied.

She moved with energy.

"It won't do to think," she said. "I have got to know. I don't buy junk."

He tried to carry himself up to her level with a laugh.

"I assure you, madam," he said, "our house is not accustomed to buy junk. It's a perfectly simple matter to tell a spurious jewel."

And he began to explain the simple, decisive tests. But she did not listen to him.

"I don't care how a vet knows that a hunter's sound. All that I want to be certain about is that he does know it. I don't want to buy hunters on my own hook. Neither do I want to buy jewels on what I know about them. If you know, that's all I care about it. And you must know or old Bartholdi wouldn't trust you. That's what I'm going on."

She was a big, aggressive woman, full of energy. Hargrave could not see her very well, but that much was abundantly clear. The carriage turned out of Piccadilly Circus, crossed Trafalgar Square and stopped before Blackwells Hotel. Blackwells has had a distinct clientele since the war; a sort of headquarters for Southeastern European visitors to London.

When the carriage stopped Mrs. Farmingham opened the door herself, before the footman could get down, and got out. It was the restless American impatience always cropping out in this woman.

"Come along, young man," she said, "and tell me whether this stuff is O. K. or junk."

They got in a lift and went up to the top floor of the hotel. Mrs. Farmingham got out and Hargrave followed her along the hall to a door at the end of a corridor. He could see her now clearly in the light. She had gray eyes, a big determined mouth, and a mass of hair dyed as only a Parisian expert, in the Rue de la Paix, can do it. She went directly to a door at the end of the corridor, rapped on it with her gloved hand, and turned the latch before anybody could possibly have responded.

Hargrave followed her into the room. It was a tiny sitting room, one of the inexpensive rooms in the hotel. There was a bit of fire in the grate, and standing by the mantelpiece was a big old man with close-cropped hair and a pale, unhealthy face. It was the type of face that one associates with tribal races in Southeastern Europe. He was dressed in a uniform that fitted closely to his figure. It was a uniform of some elevated rank, from the apparent richness of it. There were one or two decorations on the coat, a star and a heavy bronze medal. The man looked to be of some importance; but this importance did not impress Mrs. Farmingham.

"Major," she said in her direct fashion, "I have brought an expert to look at the jewels."

She indicated Hargrave, and the foreign officer bowed courteously. Then he took two candles from the mantelpiece and placed them on a little table that stood in the center of the room.

He put three chairs round this table, sat down in one of them, unbuttoned the bosom of his coat and took out a big oblong jewel case. The case was in an Oriental design and of great age. The embroidered silk cover was falling apart. He opened the case carefully, delicately, like one handling a fragile treasure. Inside, lying each in a little pocket that exactly fitted the outlines of the stone, were three rows of sapphires. He emptied the jewels out on the table.

"Sir," he said, speaking with a queer, hesitating accent, "it saddens one unspeakably to part with the ancient treasure of one's family."

Mrs. Farmingham said nothing whatever. Hargrave stooped over the jewels spread out on top of the table. There were twenty-nine sapphires of the very finest quality. He had never seen better sapphires anywhere. He remembered seeing stones that were matched up better; but he had never seen individual stones that were any finer in anybody's collection. The foreigner was composed and silent while the American examined the jewels. But Mrs. Farmingham moved restlessly in her chair.

"Well," she said, "are they O. K.?"

"Yes, madam," said Hargrave; "they are first-class stones."

"Sure?" she asked.

"Quite sure, madam," replied the American. "There can be no question about it."

"Are they worth eighteen thousand dollars?"

She put the question in such a way that Hargrave understood her perfectly.

"Well," he said, "that depends upon a good many conditions. But I'm willing to say, quite frankly, that if you don't want the jewels I'm ready to take them for our house at eighteen thousand dollars."

The big, dominant, aggressive woman made the gesture of one who cracks a dog whip.

"That's all right," she said. Then she turned to the foreigner. "Now, major, when do you want this money?"

The big old officer shrugged his shoulders and put out his hands.

"To-morrow, madame; to-morrow as I have said to you; before midday I must return. I can by no means remain an hour longer; my leave of absence expires. I must be in Bukharest at sunrise on the morning of the twelfth of October. I can possibly arrive if I leave London to-morrow at midday, but not later."

Mrs. Farmingham began to wag her head in a determined fashion.

"Nonsense," she said, "I can't get the money by noon. I have telegraphed to the Crédit Lyonnais in Paris. I can get it by the day after to-morrow, or perhaps to-morrow evening."

"If You Don't Want the Jewels I'm Ready to Take Them for Our House at Eighteen Thousand Dollars"

The foreigner looked down at the floor.

"It is impossible," he said.

The woman interrupted him.

"Now, major, that's all nonsense! A day longer can't make any difference."

He drew himself up and looked calmly at her.

"Madame," he said, "it would make all the difference in the world. If I should remain one day over my time I might just as well remain all the other days that are to follow it."

There were finality and conviction in the man's voice. Mrs. Farmingham got up and began to walk about the room. She seemed to speak to Hargrave, although he imagined that she was speaking to herself.

"Now this is a pretty how-de-do," she said. "Lady Herbert told me about this find to-night at dinner. She said Major Mikos wanted the money at once; but I didn't suppose he wanted it cash on the hour like that. She brought me right away after dinner to see him. And then I went for you." She stopped, and again made the gesture as of one who cracks a dog whip. "Now what will I do?" she said.

The last remark was evidently not addressed to Hargrave. It was not addressed to anybody. It was merely the reflection of a dominant nature taking counsel with itself. She took another turn about the room. Then she pulled up short.

"See here," she said, "suppose you take these jewels and give the major his money in the morning. Then I'll buy them of you."

"Very well, madam," said Hargrave; "but in that event we shall charge you a ten per cent commission."

She stormed at that.

"Eighteen hundred dollars?" she said. "That's absurd, ridiculous! I'm willing to pay you five hundred dollars."

The American did not undertake to argue the matter with her.

"We don't handle any sale for a less commission," he said.

Then he explained that he could not act as any sort of agent in the matter; that the only thing he could do would be to buy the jewels outright and resell them to her. His house would not make any sale for a less profit than ten per cent. Hargrave did not propose to be involved in any but a straight-out transaction. He was quite willing to buy the sapphires for eighteen thousand dollars. There was five thousand dollars' profit in them on any market. He was perfectly safe either way about. If Mrs. Farmingham made the repurchase there was a profit of ten per cent. If not, there was five thousand dollars' profit in the bargain under any conditions.

They were Siamese stones, and the cutting was of an old design. They were not from any stock in Europe. Hargrave knew what Europe held of sapphires. These were from some Oriental stock. And everybody bought an Oriental stone wherever he could get it. How the seller got it did not matter. Nobody undertook to verify the title of a Siamese trader or a Burma agent.

Mrs. Farmingham walked about for several minutes, saying over to herself as she had said before:

"Now what will I do?"

Then like the big, dominant, decisive nature that she was she came to a conclusion.

"All right," she said, "bring in the money in the morning and get the sapphires. I'll take them up in a day or two. Good-by, major; come along, Mr. Hargrave." And she went out of the room.

The American stopped at the door to bow to the old Rumanian officer who was standing up beside the table before the heap of sapphires. They got into the carriage at the curb before Blackwells Hotel. Mrs. Farmingham put Hargrave down at the Empire Club, and the carriage passed on, across Piccadilly Circus toward the Ritz.

The following morning Hargrave got the sapphires from Major Mikos, and paid him eighteen thousand dollars in English sovereigns for them. He wanted gold to carry back with him for the jewels that he had brought out of the kingdom of Rumania. He seemed a simple, anxious person. He wished to carry his treasures with him like a peasant. The sapphires looked better in the daylight. There ought to have been seven thousand dollars' profit in them, perhaps more; seven thousand dollars, at any rate, that very day in the London market. Hargrave took them to the Empire Club and put them in a sealed envelope in the steward's safe.

The thin drift of yellow remained in the city; that sulphurous haze that the blanket of sea fog, moving over London, presses down into her streets. It was not heavy yet; it was only a mist of saffron; but it threatened to gather volume as the day advanced.

At luncheon Hargrave got a note from Mrs. Farmingham, a line scrawled on her card to say that she would call for him at three o'clock. Her carriage was before the door

(Concluded on Page 34)

DOWN AND UP

THE judge paused after his stern castigation. He looked down at me grimly before he opened his lips again. When, at last, he bit off the words of my sentence they seemed to rasp against his big white teeth: "It is the judgment of this court that you be confined in the state prison for a term of not less than four years and not more than fourteen years."

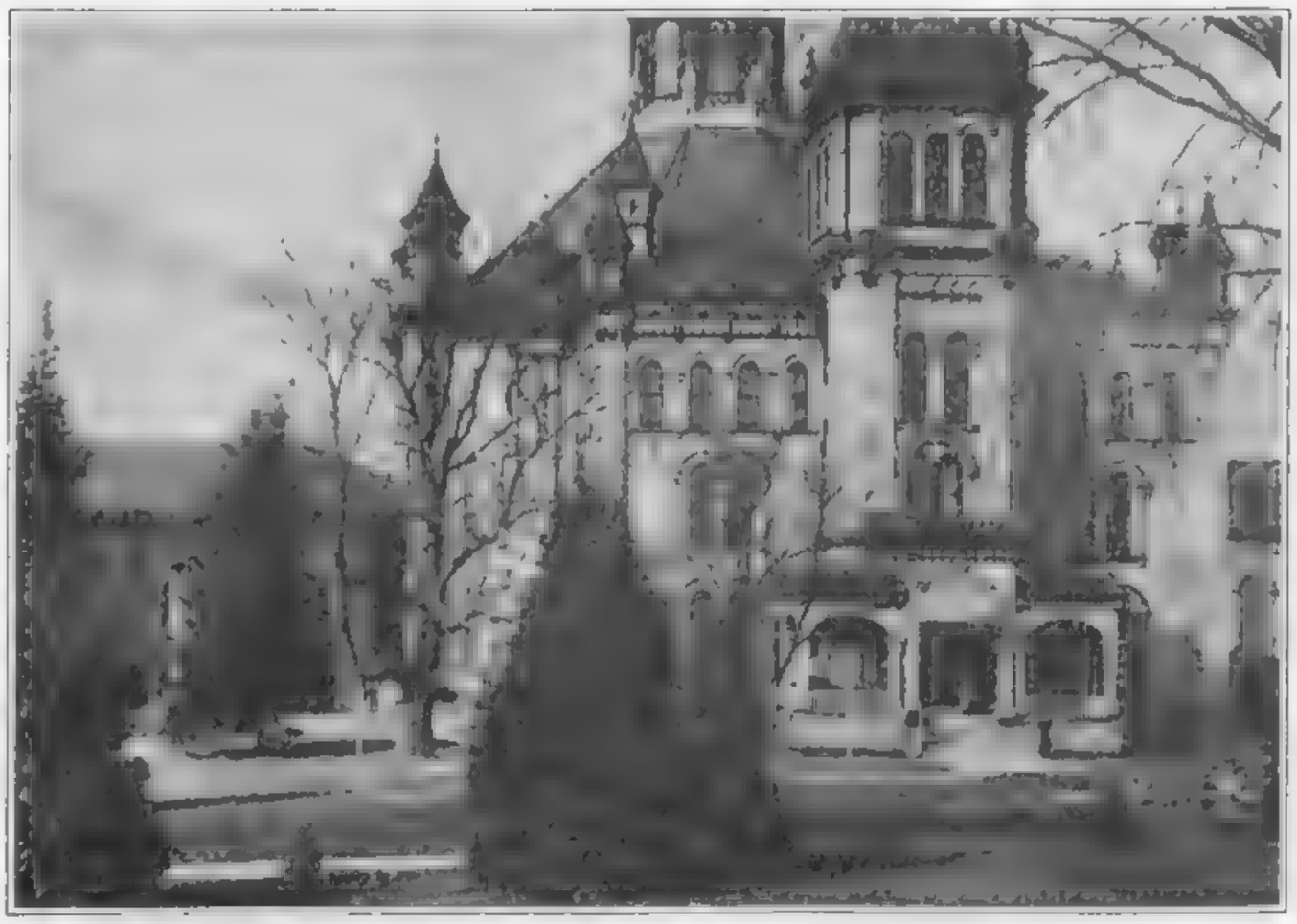
I drew a long breath. The suspense was over. I knew the worst. I turned to the chair where my wife sat and walked toward her. I tried to smile reassuringly as she jumped up and ran into my arms.

"Four—four years!" she choked out. But she did not cry.

"We shan't be separated so long," I whispered stoutly. "I'm sure I'll earn a commutation of that sentence."

I had talked to my wife at the jail about some plans I had made. But they seemed so chimerical that she had little faith in them; so my confident declaration now gave her no comfort. She clung to my shoulders and repeated her moan of despair:

"Four years! Oh, it's cruel! I can't bear it!"



The "Front House," or Warden's Residence, at the Michigan Reformatory

Yet she did not break down. We left the courtroom and went to the clerk's office, where we were permitted to talk in private for an hour. She regained the wonderful courage she had kept ever since my arrest. When the clerk came to the door and said the time was up, she gave me a last kiss and walked bravely out into the world alone. I started with a deputy sheriff to the penitentiary.

I had been locked in the county jail three weeks. It was midsummer; and my confinement in a hot, cramped, vermin-infested cell had made me look forward with real eagerness to the day when I should be transferred to the comparative freedom of the state prison. There I knew I should have opportunities for exercise, fresh air and, above all else, some work to do. Never, before I was penned in the jail, had I realized the torture of enforced, protracted idleness.

I felt no resentment against the law or my prosecutors. I had committed forgery in a fatuous effort to save a doomed business. The inevitable crash resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars loaned to the manufacturing company of which I had been president. I realized now that I was getting only my just deserts. I intended to take my medicine without a whimper. In that spirit I became an inmate of the prison.

The Men at the Washtub

I WAS assigned to work under the hallmaster. His assistant initiated me with a bit of frank advice:

"You won't find prison life any picnic; but if you give us a square deal in obedience of the rules and in your work, you'll soon earn privileges that will make things a lot easier for you."

Then he told me what my first task was to be:

"We had a fire two weeks ago that burned our steam laundry. We are only doing absolutely necessary washing now, over in one of the cell blocks. We have to use common tubs and rubbing boards. I have two young fellows on the job, but they are full of the devil and do their work any old way. I want you to take hold of the washing with them and see that it is done right."

It would have been easy for me to imagine several hot-weather occupations pleasanter than scrubbing soggy towels, shirts, socks and bandanna "wipes"—all very dirty. The odors that steamed from my washtub were nauseating. But the disagreeable features of that first job I had in prison were trivial in comparison with its advantages to me. I knew my assignment to the extemporized laundry gave me a chance to earn soon one of the privileges of which the assistant hallmaster had spoken. I wanted a favor that would enable me to begin the new lifework I had planned before my sentence.

First, I must fulfill my official superior's anticipation of improved washing. I realized at the outset that I could not accomplish this alone. I needed to secure the hearty coöperation of my two fellow inmates in the laundry. I won their venal regard within a minute after we shook hands by proffering my can of tobacco to them. One was a young highway robber; the other a neophyte burglar, not yet out of his teens. A state law forbade the penitentiary officials to issue either smoking or chewing tobacco to prisoners who were minors. Neither of my workmates was entitled to draw tobacco. Therefore the division of my ration with them, in violation of the rules, instantly bound their friendship to me with the double ties of gratitude and expectation.

I was inducted to the laundry on a Saturday. I told the two boys my instructions from the hallmaster. They admitted they had shirked their work, but readily promised to do better. Both made good, with their eyes on my tobacco can. I went to my cell at quitting time gratified by the knowledge that we had turned out a day's washing which was reasonably clean.

My first Sunday in the penitentiary was "letter day." The precious boon of writing was granted to prisoners only twice a month under the regulations, though special permission might be given by the chaplain for extra letters. I was very glad to have this early opportunity of assuring my wife that I was cheerful and well. I wrote, also, that I hoped to start within a few days toward the consummation of the purpose I had explained to her. I was careful not to make the letter too optimistic; but it showed in every line my confidence that I should work free from the wreckage of my old career and build a new, successful life out of the débris of failure.

On Sundays all the prisoners, except the men whose tasks required them to be on duty seven days a week, were locked in their cells immediately after the noon dinner and were not released until next morning. I spent the long hours that first Sunday pondering the big new-life program I had had in mind more than three weeks. I reviewed everything I had thought with regard to it when I was in the jail.

The day I was arrested I began making plans to "come back." I was at the bottom, deep in the mire, then. I concluded that since I could go no farther down, and was not inclined to strangle in the muck, there was only one direction in which I could move—that was up. I knew I should not be able to wait resignedly for the expiration of a long prison term before making a fresh start. Years of nonaccomplishment probably would rust away my reason. Besides, I was thirty-seven years old; I had no time to waste. But what career was there in which I might hope to gain success while still locked up?

I considered and rejected as impracticable a dozen projects before I perceived that I had no choice of callings. There was just one vocation I could pursue in prison that offered any chance to me of earning money for the support of my family, and that might rehabilitate me in the world's eyes, despite the gray uniform of disgrace: I must become a writer and produce manuscripts that would sell in the best markets.

I was not influenced to this decision by any self-delusion that I had a natural talent for authorship. For fifteen years I had been a manufacturer of electrical specialties. Not since my adolescence had I ever written anything except daily grists of business letters, occasional paragraphs for catalogues, and a few trade-paper advertisements of the products of my factory. If I had been born with a genius for writing I knew I should have suspected the fact long before I was arrested. But my fingers never had itched for the touch of a facile pen. A manufacturer I should have remained all my life, in entire contentment with my lot, if I had not been wrecked.

I realized that I was venturing into a profession of which I knew practically nothing; nevertheless, at the jail I confidently told my wife that I soon would learn to write stories. I was positive in my declaration that I could sell them for more than enough to support her and our boy in comfort. I asserted with conviction, too, that public interest in my success would result in a general demand for the restoration of my liberty, so that I might work unhandicapped.

As I type this bit of autobiography now I marvel that I thought the accomplishment of such a program within my capabilities. Yet I was sure from the day when I conceived my plans that I should succeed as a writer. Looking in retrospection at those first weeks following my arrest, I can conjecture but one explanation of my attitude: I must have realized subconsciously that it was necessary for me at the time when the world was calling me a failure to retain a full measure of faith in myself. I had to believe, right then, that I could do tremendously difficult things. Otherwise I should have lost my nerve and have been self-doomed to slink through the remainder of my life. I did not have those thoughts exactly when I was making my plans for a new career. Rather I epitomized their substance by gritting my teeth, as I lay in my cell bunk at the jail, and muttering impersonally:

"I'll show them whether or not I'm a failure!"

Quick Praise for Good Work

THAT first Sunday afternoon at the penitentiary, while I paced my nine-by-five cell or squatted on the rickety stool and schemed my future as a writer, I had merely the vaguest idea of the difficulties an author must overcome before arriving at the goal of even a humble literary ambition. I thought then only of the immediate handicaps of my own environment. I had settled absolutely in my mind that I could soon become proficient in the production of manuscripts if I were allowed to study and practice. In my ignorance I believed it would be easy. My sole apprehension was that I might be denied the privilege of writing in prison.

I was eager to begin practicing on a story at once; but first I must contrive to win permission. I planned my strategy more carefully than I ever had worked out the details of any important business scheme. It was primarily necessary to gain the approval of the prison officer directly in authority over me. I resolved that the laundry work the following week should be done so well that the hallmaster must notice the great improvement. His commendation would warrant me in making the first overt move toward my big desire.

The two other men in the improvised laundry had no such incentive to do their best as actuated me. But Monday morning I took them both into my confidence and asked their coöperation. As an inducement I promised to forgo smoking myself, and to divide between them my weekly allowance of tobacco from the state if they would help me to turn out better washings. They readily agreed, but stipulated that I should pay their illegal wages in "chewing" instead of "smoking." I was able to make the exchange of my ration with the hallmaster's clerk, a fellow prisoner, and I apportioned the plug between my workmates. As a result the hickory shirts, towels, socks and bandanna handkerchiefs we delivered roughdry to the cells that week were all reasonably clean.

I did not have to make a claim to personal credit for the improvement. The hallmaster called me to his office on Thursday and commended me. He also broadly hinted that the effective though unlawful means I had employed to secure my workmates' coöperation was not a secret from him, as I had supposed. Some stool pigeon had snitched on me. I was not punished, however, for furnishing tobacco to minors. On the contrary, after the hallmaster spoke his

approval of the laundry work he reached into a drawer of his desk and pulled out a big slab of "state chewing."

"Here!" He tossed it to me and winked. I was to learn that there were many actual and more constructive official winks at the violations of minor prison rules. "Maybe the machinery will need oiling again before Saturday."

He waved his hand toward the door in dismissal. But I seized the opportune chance to broach the subject uppermost in my thoughts.

"Thanks, Mr. Gillette," I expressed my appreciation of his largess. "This will come in handy. Now while I'm here I'm going to ask a favor of you for myself. The evenings and Sundays in my cell are pretty long. I'd like to do some work to pass the time. May I have permission to send home for paper and a fountain pen? I have an idea I could write stories for the magazines after a little practice."

He smiled—amusedly I thought.

"A lot of the boys get that notion when they first come here," he made dry response. "If they are the right kind of fellows we generally humor them. But in the fourteen years I've been an officer of this prison we haven't turned out an author yet. However, I'll ask the deputy warden if you can have writing materials in your cell. I'll recommend you."

The skepticism of the hallmaster did not discourage me a bit. I left his office in a most exuberant state of mind. I felt that the principal obstacle in the road toward success had been removed. My goal, which had been an indefinite distance ahead, seemed all at once very near. I was in such exaltation that the rarefied atmosphere lent my eyes telescopic vision.

The deputy warden's approval of my request for paper and pen was given promptly. I thereupon asked and received the chaplain's permission to send an extra letter to my wife telling her what writing materials I wanted her to mail. While I waited for their arrival I further advanced my project with the aid of the assistant librarian, an inmate like myself. I inquired of him if there were any collections of good short stories among his books. He brought to my cell O. Henry's The Four Million. This, he informed me, was "nothin' but short stories, and might have something in it that would give a feller ideas." He had become interested in my ambition, of which I had told him in the course of a previous chat. His friendly coöperation was but one instance of the eagerness to help me shown by practically all the prisoners with whom I had personal relations; though most of the men were very ignorant.

How O. Henry Helped

AT THAT time—July, 1911—the pen name O. Henry was entirely new to me. The fact that I was unfamiliar with the work of Sydney Porter signified my ignorance then with regard to all magazine fiction. It had been my habit for many years to buy regularly the issues of a dozen or more popular periodicals, but I had never paid any attention to the novels or short stories. My factory kept me busy. My time for reading was limited. So I had been accustomed to select from the contents of the magazines I raced through only the nonfiction articles, which appealed to my practical mind.

My second Sunday at the penitentiary, however, I read from cover to cover the bound collection of Mr. Porter's masterpieces. The book opened to me the door to a strange land of delight. Of the few short stories I had skimmed previously, none had been at all like those of The Four Million. I was fascinated. On the spot I resolved to write like O. Henry. I forthwith set myself to studying his style.

That Sunday I also joined the magazine club of the penitentiary, which was conducted by the deputy warden's clerk. This club circulated among the inmates about forty periodicals. Memberships cost only a dollar and a half a year. Each subscriber was entitled to the loan of two magazines a week. During the remainder of my imprisonment I had every number of eight monthly general publications. Besides these, I received THE SATURDAY EVENING POST and two other weeklies.

My Cell Was 44 on the Bottom Tier

In my reading while I was an inmate of the penitentiary I reversed the rule of former years. I now perused very little of the magazines' contents except the short stories and serial novels. These current products of the leading popular authors of fiction, together with such works of O. Henry as were contained in the prison library, constituted my textbooks of writing.

My wife promptly mailed the paper and fountain pen I had sent for. I started my practice in composition. I had three hours of leisure in my cell every week day after working hours, and ten hours free on Sundays. But I was not satisfied. I schemed to gain more opportunities for writing.

My Last Prison Job Consisted in Taking Care of These Grounds

The work in the laundry actually required only six hours a day to do well. My companions and I dawdled over our tubs to kill time. The wasted precious hours tantalized me. When I had been at the penitentiary about a month I made another request of the hallmaster.

"Mr. Gillette, I believe that if we hustle we can get out our washing by half past two every day. Now suppose we do finish two hours earlier than we have been doing—may we take that time for ourselves?"

"What would you do after you got done work?" he instantly demanded. "That pair of young hellions would be up to some devilment if they weren't kept busy."

"They have more common sense than to lose a privilege," I declared earnestly. "I've heard them say they'd like to earn a little pocket money. Probably they'd spend most of their free time making clamshell jewelry for the visitors' souvenir table in the reception room."

"What were you going to do yourself?"

"I'd put in my two hours reading, and practice on writing."

"How are you coming on with your stories?" the hallmaster bantered. "Sold many yet?"

I shook my head and smiled.

He grinned good-naturedly; then frowned a minute while he considered my request. I waited anxiously for him to speak again.

"About that laundry work," he at last gave his decision: "If you can get done before the regular quitting time and still do a good job on the washing, I'm willing. But warn those two other Chinks there mustn't be any monkeyin' or rough-house in the cell block unless they want to get stood on the floor and put in the hole."

I went out, delighted, to tell the boys about the privilege I had secured. They gleefully pledged themselves not to "raise any hell," as the young burglar expressed their promise. Nor did they, though both naturally took advantage of their improved opportunities for "bumming" tobacco from the adult inmates who came within their longer reach. For the most part, they spent their late afternoons polishing clamshells on the cement floor. I luxuriated in a broken chair, with a piece of board on my lap to serve as a desk, and wrought at my writing.

The New Mop

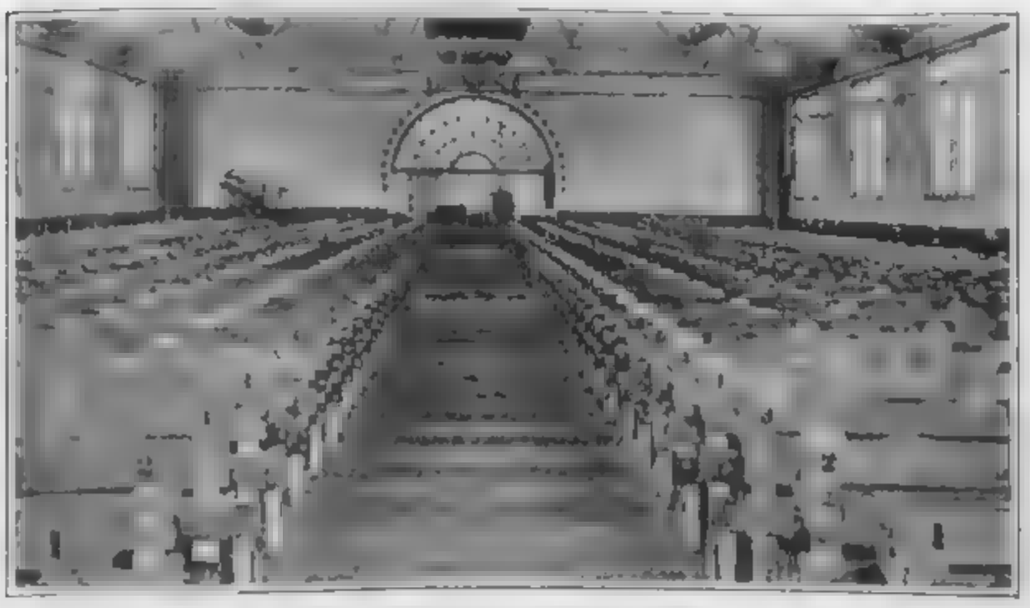
ANOTHER month passed. I had worked diligently and now believed I was making rapid progress in knowledge of the art of authorship. But, self-deluded though I was, I felt that my stories were imperfect yet; so I postponed the sending of a manuscript to an editor. Meantime I spent six hours a day over my aromatic washtub until the hallmaster informed me one afternoon that the burned steam laundry had been rebuilt and was equipped again to do all the prison washing. This resulted in changes of employment for my two fellows and myself. They were assigned to the bakery and tailor shop respectively. I was appointed janitor of the rotunda.

My principal duty now was to mop about eight thousand square feet of floor tiling twice a day. There were odd jobs to do occasionally, but the mopping was the main task. I had often observed my Ethiopian predecessor while he cleaned the big floor. He used an ordinary small kitchen mop. It was his practice to swish it back and forth and crosswise, after the method of housewives in cramped quarters. He would cover a few square yards of surface with dirty water, then would souse his mop in a pail and wring it. After that he sopped up the moisture on the tiles. This slow process required nearly three hours to clean the rotunda floor once; the task had to be performed each morning and afternoon. It was tedious, back-tiring toil. I worked at the irksome new job only one day before I went to the hallmaster, ostensibly with a suggestion of a means to improve my workmanship. I was careful to conceal my actual object.

"Mr. Gillette," I declared, "that mop I have isn't the right kind. I've scrubbed the floor the best I know how to-day, but streaks show wherever the light strikes. I'd like to make those tiles shine. I can do it with a wide, heavy mop. There are several old, discarded blankets in the back of the cell block. If I may take one of them, and make a holder for it, I'll show you a good job to-morrow."

"All right," he consented immediately. "Go ahead."

I started to construct the improved mop that afternoon. I had but little skill in such handicraft; consequently my new tool was not completed until next day. As soon as it was done I tried it. The big mop worked better than I had hoped it would. When I finished my morning's task the rotunda floor was cleaner than I had ever seen it before. What was of infinitely more importance to me, the job had taken only an hour and a quarter, less than half the time that had been necessary in the old way. Elated, I went to my overseer for his judgment—though I was not seeking glory alone in my achievement.



The Dining Room Where I Ate

"That's fine!" the hallmaster approved. "You've got the right idea. In all the years that rotunda has been mopped, I'll bet you are the first inmate who has taken enough interest in his work to figure out the best way to do it. Keep it up!"

My face was agrin when I went to the cell block and sat down in my chair. The new method of mopping would cut my regular hours of labor to approximately three a day, no more than was necessary to keep me in good physical condition. Moreover, the task was not arduous toil, as it had been previously. It was unnecessary now to do all the work with my arm muscles. I merely dragged or pushed the saturated wide blanket in parallel swaths across the floor. Its weight scoured the tiles thoroughly and quickly. Frequent rinsings with running water in an old bathtub kept the mop clean.

I realized that I was in some danger of being set at additional tasks, now that I had so much leisure. But I felt confident the hallmaster would not so penalize my ingenuity. I was meticulously careful in doing my assigned work every day. After it was completed I sat in a corner of the cell block with my board on my lap and wrote.

By and by I ventured to send a story to a magazine. I do not recall just when or to what editor it was dispatched. I think the initial launching in the shipyard of my fond dreams took place about Thanksgiving, approximately four months and a half after I became an inmate of the penitentiary. I have a distinct recollection, however, that I privately esteemed that first story of mine as a masterpiece of original humor, which was certain to be seized avidly by the favored recipient. I preened in the combined mantles of O. Henry and Mark Twain. I visioned myself as the peer of Irvin S. Cobb.

For nine days I glowed in confident expectation. Then the stamped return envelope I perfunctorily had inclosed with my manuscript came back. It contained my story, considerably mussed, as if an impatient hand had shoved it disgustedly into the inclosure. There also was a printed rejection slip, Exhibit Number One in a collection I have made, which now includes nearly a score of different dispiriteners of the same species.

Mr. White Gives a Helping Hand

I WAS more shocked than disappointed at first. I could hardly believe that my story had been spurned. My pride was stung when I comprehended. I felt as if the editor had slapped my face. A hot flush of anger burned my cheeks while I sat in my cell the night after I received the stuffed long envelope from the chaplain's clerk. I glared at the smugly scornful rejection slip. I was "mad clear through." I gritted my teeth just as I had five months before at the jail and muttered to myself again:

"I'll show them!"

Strict candor requires that I confess I added an expletive to relieve the internal pressure of my boiling wrath.

After a few minutes my rage began to cool. I felt rather foolish. It dawned on me that possibly the returned manuscript had a few faults which had rendered it unacceptable. I studied the pages, searching for defects; but I was baffled by my own fatuity. The story seemed to me not a whit less clever than I had considered it when I mailed the manuscript. I decided to send it out again forthwith. I guessed it had been rejected by some whippersnapper underling because it was hand-written instead of typed. I was confident that in another magazine office, if it should come under the eyes of the editor himself its excellence would be appreciated. I felt quite chipper next morning when I requested permission of the chaplain to remail my manuscript.

With a twinkle of humor in his eyes he added disconcertingly to his grant of the privilege I had asked: "You probably will want to send your stories out pretty often. You needn't come and ask specially for my O. K. each time. Just give the stories to my clerk and we'll mail them."

I thanked him and smiled rather wryly, to show that I saw the point. I appreciated the opened door of correspondence with editors. I had felt somewhat diffident each time I requested the chaplain's permission to send an extra letter. But his broad smile that morning melted most of the starch from my former cocky self-confidence. Though I walked very erectly out of his office, the stiffness of my spine lasted only until I was beyond his sight.

After that I expected the manuscript to come back. My one hope was that a letter might be inclosed which would explain the rejection.

I had lost my earlier assurance; yet I doggedly persisted in my determination that I would learn how to write. I mopped the rotunda mornings and afternoons daily, and between each sunrise and bedtime I devoted six or eight hours to the study of magazine fiction or to practicing composition. My manuscript was back from the second editor in less than two weeks. The rejection slip was printed in much more emphatic type than was the similar specimen of the printer's black art I already possessed. But in substance its tenor implied the same kind of scornful coldness toward my literary aspirations as had frosted the first evidence of editorial disdain. I swallowed my wrath again. It was easier this time, for the lump was not so big or so hot as before. Then I obstinately began to write another story. Immediately after completing it I mailed the manuscript to a third magazine.

My experiences as an author that first winter of my imprisonment were monotonously discouraging. I wrote six or eight stories and tried each in half a dozen markets. When I took an inventory of my stock in the spring I had all the manuscripts, considerably travel-worn, still on hand. In addition I was the prideless possessor of approximately twoscore rejection slips. My little stamp account in the chaplain's office had been depleted by over six dollars, a very serious financial loss.

I felt depressed—not about my writing, for I was stubborn in my determination to succeed in the end; but it was disheartening not to get from any editor the least intimation of what was his objection to my work. I still was blind to my faults, though I had tried hard to discover them unaided. My cockiness was all gone now. Yet when I became engrossed in the writing of a story I often felt briefly the old thrill of confidence. I read and reread the manuscripts that were returned; they still had the power to warm me with self-satisfaction. I thought my humor very funny. It was—laughable; there is a sheepish smile on my face now as I write about it.

In March I was transferred from the rotunda assignment to the prison greenhouse and appointed assistant to the inmate foreman. The new job brought me under the orders of the warden himself. Flowers and plants were his hobby. He personally directed much of the greenhouse work; consequently I was often in contact with him. One day I mentioned my perplexities. He was an exceptionally well-read man and I knew he would understand them.

"Mr. Howell," I said, "I have been trying to write stories for the magazines, but I haven't sold any. I had hoped I could earn some money to send home; I was able to leave my family only a little cash that I borrowed on my life insurance before I came here. They have had to spend nearly half of it already, and I must make more while I am in prison. But I'm stumped about my writing." Then I briefly related my experiences with editors. I concluded: "What worries me most is that I can't get any line on my work. If I could find out what my faults are I'd tackle the job of remedying them. As a great favor, will you read a couple of my manuscripts sometime and tell me what you think ails them?"

He nodded.

"I am entirely willing to look them over for you, but I don't think my opinion as a critic will be worth much. I seldom read short stories. I practically never have time for that sort of thing."

This was not encouraging, but I thanked the warden and gave him two manuscripts. He brought them back three days later, when he next visited the greenhouse.

"I read them," he reported. "They seemed to me pretty well written; but, as I told you the other day, I am no judge of fiction. You ought to get the opinion of a qualified critic. I won't undertake to advise you. I might do you more harm than good."

Barren of immediate results though this attempt to secure counsel was, it interested the warden in my writing. Thereafter, until I left the penitentiary, he afforded me every facility and encouragement. I was required, of course, to do my prison tasks; but they seldom kept me busy more than six hours a day. I soon had additional time for writing too. I was made a trusty, and my cell was unlocked from five o'clock in the morning until nine at night. I spent all my leisure hours in the greenhouse at an old desk the warden allowed me to use. I also was permitted to get a secondhand typewriter. I moiled over my stories in a shaded corner of the palm room.

By coincidence, only a few days after the warden had said I ought to have the opinion of a qualified literary critic on my work a friend came to see me at the penitentiary. In the course of our chat he told me he expected to be in New York City the next week, and that while there he would be the guest of Mr. Trumbull White, who was then editor of Everybody's Magazine. My friend offered to take some of my manuscripts with him and to secure Mr. White's criticism of them.

I hurried to the office of the warden and told him of the chance I had. He at once gave me permission to send the stories. I went to the greenhouse and brought back half a dozen manuscripts that I considered my best work. I handed them to the warden, who passed them on to my friend.

I waited anxiously more than a fortnight for the editor's judgment. It came in the form of a letter from my intermediary. He wrote that Mr. White had read all six stories and condemned every one because of its manifestations of "crude, Smart Aleck" authorship. Three of the plots, however, the editor considered good. He said that if I could do simple, unaffected writing there were fine opportunities for development in half the themes I had mistreated. My friend concluded his letter by expressing the hope that the "brutal frankness" with which he wrote would not discourage me but would spur me to an endeavor to eliminate the faults Mr. White had pointed out.

Success Almost in Sight

I WAS hot with dudgeon when I first read the letter, but I cooled after a second perusal. I began to see my stories with clarified vision. All at once I realized why I had been floundering in failure for a year. I was not myself in my manuscripts, but had striven always to imitate some successful writer. I had been only a clumsy counterfeiter, and the trained eyes of editors had discerned the spurious marks.

I decided to start afresh. I would write simply and naturally. Now that Mr. White had stripped me of every vestige of my former self-exaltation, I paradoxically was more confident than ever before that I should make good my resolution to become a successful writer.

I began work anew the same day I received my friend's letter. I made no attempt then to revise the manuscripts I had already written; I put them all away in my desk. Mr. White said there was some good plot material in them; so I did not tear them up. But during my next experiment as an author I meant not to be hampered by any preconceptions.

This time I tackled my life job grimly. I had no delusion now that I should find it easy, but I plodded at my toilsome task. I read fewer magazine stories and wrote much less than had been my custom. I spent many hours just thinking. Several months elapsed before I sent out a new story; then very humbly I mailed a manuscript to the American Magazine. It came back; but in place of a rejection slip I found a personal letter in the returned envelope. Mr. John S. Phillips wrote to me, in substance: "This is almost a good story; but somehow it is not quite right. We shall be glad to see another soon."

His encouragement galvanized me. I had been working desultorily on a novel for several months and happened to have the manuscript on my desk when his letter came. At once I plunged enthusiastically into the writing of the book, determined to finish it without more delay. But I could not bring the novel to an early end. It stretched to a length of 135,000 words and took me three months to complete. Not until I had expressed it to the Bobbs-Merrill Company did I attempt another short story.

I now was beginning my second winter in the penitentiary. My greenhouse work was light during cold weather and I had more leisure time than ever before. I spent practically all of it in writing. Stories were on my mind constantly. I even dreamed about plots. However, I sent out only three or four manuscripts in the course of six months. They were all returned, as their predecessors had been; but twice I received letters of lukewarm encouragement from editors.

Of course my book came back from the Bobbs-Merrill Company also. Mr. Russel Mitcheltree, who had read it,

(Continued on Page 37)

The Prison Greenhouse, Where I Did Much of My Writing

JOY RIDERS

By Joseph Hergesheimer

ILLUSTRATED BY F. R. GRUGER

XI

DESPITE her threat to speak her mind, Mrs. Madlon did not do so, but sat uneasily through a long dinner at which Vida Madlon entertained the Tamms and their Oriental guest. Mrs. Madlon was next to Cobbett—Roscoe Madlon had not returned—and the incensed mother of the political power muttered unintelligibly to Cobbett through the courses. She filled her cheeks and blew out surreptitiously, digging him with her elbow; and the youth gathered that her pantomime represented a Celestial laundryman with a shirt.

Fong H'Tai was different from any other Chinese he had seen; they had been stolid, hardy individuals, with a choked, inadequate English. This man's face was the color—the consistence apparently—of a full, pale date. His voice, easily mastering the Western tongue, flowed in a succession of liquid and rounded blocks of sound. His eyes, a mere glimmer of vision, were like bits of polished agate. His underlip drooped, contemptuous and sultry.

He Could Escape by Himself, Without That Leaden Thing Hanging on Him!

Vida Madlon wore scarlet, and a diamond and platinum necklace; Mrs. Tamm, diaphanous yellow; and neither had a fold or a grain of powder misplaced. They were, as usual, flawless in appearance; but, Cobbett judged, beneath they might have been skillfully molded glass; there was always about them a cold, smooth sheen. Yet he had never seen Miss Madlon so interested in a man before. She even exhibited a wintry graciousness, and conversed with the most sophisticated elegance.

The Chinaman, disdaining the greater part of the dinner, consumed some fruit and an ice, and talked blandly, with his gaze shifting from woman to woman. His supple hands, with dark burnished nails, Mrs. Madlon declared afterward, gave her the creeps.

Fong H'Tai became now the center of a small group of women—Vida Madlon, Mrs. Tamm, Miss Engeld and one or two additional handsome women. They sat about him in their elaborate and artificial bathing costumes, powdering their noses, gazing complacently over their correct proportions; while the Oriental, in immaculate white, smoked cigarettes in a jade tube and contemplated them enigmatically.

A girl, young and stouter than the rest, paused for a moment by this group during the bathing hour; then continued toward the surf, drawing over a glinting mass of hair a rubber cap. Cobbett had never seen her before; but she smiled at him with such inviting eyes, like blue flowers, her entire being radiated such an open friendliness, that he smiled involuntarily in return. He saw that she had no preparation on her fresh young cheeks and that her arms were beautiful.

It was, he found out, Kata Engeld, Sidney Engeld's youngest daughter. On the following morning she paused for a longer exchange of opinions; they conversed again as she left the water, and soon after he was seated at her feet on the sand.

He found in Kata Engeld a welcome atmosphere, an attentive audience for his expanding egotism. She was entirely transparent, generously warm in appreciation and applause; and it was evident that she had fast grown to like him. Kata was doubly restful for the reason that she did not disturb him as a personality; she roused no interest in him, no speculation; he could never care for her. But neither, he reminded himself, could he care for the others, however slender and seductive they might be.

Sometimes, in the evening, when he had walked idly down to the beach with Milton, Kata Engeld would appear in lace, with blue ribbons, and a band about her fine brow and hair, and join them, with a carefully casual remark. It was too bad, Cobbett thought, that she was so fat; she was a surprisingly nice girl. The former truth she herself admitted cheerfully.

"I'd like to have a figure like Bessie," she added. "But I'd never take the trouble she does."

They were seated, Kata and Cobbett and Milton Madlon, on the low concrete wall drawn across the face of the sand and night. The sky and sea were merged in a darkness on which long white bars of foam ceaselessly formed and dissolved.

"I'll bet," Milton proclaimed, "that my Aunt Vida takes longer to dress than your sister; and I'll bet she puts on more layers."

Kata laughed, and Cobbett frowningly watched his glowing cigar. He seldom laughed now; his thoughts were of a too serious, important texture to permit mere gayety.

Roscoe Madlon had commenced to speak of his political connections; hint at vast, widespreading activities. He called Cobbett to one end of the porch when the latter had sauntered back from the beach. "I have been waiting for a chance to turn something over to you," he told the younger man; "to give you a start, a little influence. And at last the right opportunity has come along.

"I own a corner down in the city, with a saloon, ladies' entrance and cabaret. A little place, but a money-maker—yes, and with some votes at that; and I'm going to deed it to you. I'm slowly getting out of that sort of thing—you know, there's a chance of my reaching something national—and I'm glad to pass it to you. There's the straight lease—no trouble about the license—and something, I understand, turned over on the side for privileges. I never knew just what they were, but it's worth a couple of hundred a month; and they are wised downtown to let it live."

A glow of intense satisfaction warmed Cobbett Gannon. . . . A couple of hundred a month; votes actually to swing; a recognized place in the secret and omnipotent force that controlled the city! He accepted it, with a note of triumph in his thanks. Already he was "in right." His feet had at last struck the path mounting smoothly and easily to success. How green, how young, he had been!

"I'll go down and look it over," he proclaimed.

"That's where you will make a mistake," Madlon informed him. "You want to keep away from them little things. Work through agents; keep out of the spotlight. You'll get knifed at first, but you'll soon learn. Let the others dig. Sit back! Sit back and get the larger drift."

XII

GANNON rehearsed his material advancement, the acquisition of a property of his own, with a comfortable self-approbation the next afternoon, sitting in a cool angle of the beach wall. Milton Madlon lay on his back, frowning at the sky, and Kata Engeld, who had been sitting above them on the wall, had just left. The drumming of the flood tide sounded faintly on Cobbett's conscience; he was rapt by the vision of a swift rise to power; filled with contempt for all men who couldn't succeed, who had been unable to make money. His back was toward the bathers; the can, resting on a support, with its coiled rope below; the surfboat, against which Plint was leaning, alert and patient.

The sea seemed far away until an irritable voice drew him back to the actualities of his situation. He turned and saw one of the beach captains, his face doubly dark under a white canvas hat—a man with flat, lithe muscles and a bristling gray mustache.

"Gannon," he rasped, "I've took note of you for the last few weeks, and 'dog' if you ain't the worst guard in the service. Here you are, with some women bathing—and you staring at a wall! Stop down at headquarters to-night."

Cobbett, his egotism unpleasantly probed, gazed hardily at the other. He was totally indifferent to what might overtake his position in the beach guards; but he resented the captain's arrogant tone.

"What's the noise, Cob?" Milton Madlon demanded, sitting upright. The boy turned toward the newcomer. "Where did you blow in from?" he asked insolently.

The elder man's face expressed a swift anger that, as he was at the point of giving it words, changed to a sharp restraint. He was silent for a moment, gazing with somber eyes at the boy; then:

"Young Mr. Madlon, hey! I heard something about that. Well, Gannon, if there's any trouble on this beach I'll go after you over any head in the city. You may be in right, but there's some of us with a little insides left, and we're proud of this service; we think a lot of our record."

He turned abruptly and left. Milton grinned.

"We canned him, all right!" he proclaimed.

But Cobbett's feeling of discomfort lingered until evening, when he was on the sea wall in the soothing company of Kata Engeld. She wore, as usual, filmy white, with a deep collar, and the band about her forehead gave her—under a bright new moon—almost an absolute beauty. Cobbett contemplated her with satisfaction. . . . She was the most reasonable girl he had ever known; if one was forced to marry, and it was undoubtedly convenient in many ways, Kata would be ideal. She understood things. And then she was Sidney Engeld's daughter. This in itself would not sway him; he would not marry anyone merely for money—he could get that for himself—but Kata's entire situation was agreeable. She would help him.

"What are you thinking about?" she demanded.

"About getting married," he answered without thought.

He saw that a deep, startled color filled her cheeks; Cobbett thought, almost with an audible gasp, that his vague

conjecturing might well be a possibility. He gravely revolved the idea; and the longer he entertained it the more compelling it became. He would, of course, be absolutely honest with her; he might not be able to give her that which seemed so essential to nice girls. Lost in thought, his cigar went out—he had learned indirectly from Roscoe Madlon that cigarettes were not appropriate to the place he hoped to occupy—and he threw it away.

"You're an awfully comfortable sort of a girl, Kata," he told her. "I like to be with you."

She answered:

"I like you, too, Cobbett, better than anybody I know; better than my own family."

The completeness of this admission silenced him for a doubtful period. He had a feeling of blundering improperly into a still, sweet inclosure; a sense of wrong intrusion. He avoided Kata's face, turned toward him in the swimming, blue gloom. Still he had determined to assume no false attitude, to pretend nothing.

"I think I could be happy with you, Kata," he continued; "but I'm not sure you would be satisfied with all that I could offer. I have had," he said somberly, "a very unhappy experience, and lost something never to return. A woman could never be to me what once was possible—and yet," he added, "in a way it has made me stronger. Nothing like that can ever touch me again. I would be immovable in my attitude to whoever I married. I would be faithful till I died. . . . Perhaps that would mean something to a girl."

Suddenly he felt the pressure of her hand above his. A fleet, disturbing shame moved him and vanished.

"I could never really love you," he added concisely.

"I won't bother about that now, Cobbett," she told him. "You're pretty young to be sure of such a thing. The other—faith—does mean an immense amount. My father is like that, and mamma's life has been a heaven of peace. We won't bother at all about the sort of love you think you've lost. We'll just be splendid friends—splendid married friends," she particularized. "I must tell you this, though, and then we won't mention it again—you see, it's different for a girl. I do love you, Cobbett!"

They sat silently for a little, and then unconsciously he commenced to expand his possibilities and hopes. He told her of his rising fortunes; what Roscoe Madlon had promised for him and what the power had already performed; of the place he owned; the two hundred dollars a month that had been dropped carelessly into his pocket.

"And that's only the beginning; but that's the most difficult part. It'll be easy from now."

"I can help," she said simply.

"I'll get you a big solitaire," he told her, thinking of Vida Madlon's rings; his wife must have impressive jewelry, the proper reflex of his own importance.

"I'd be just as happy with a little one," Kata said; "happier, I think." They were standing, and she slipped her hand under his arm. "A little one would be honester now," she continued; "and then, later, when you had accomplished so much and I had great rubies, we could look at the engagement ring and remember how we were young and you had just one small property. Of course, Cobbett, there will be always mine; but that isn't the same, is it? You wouldn't be content, I can feel that—or I shouldn't care for you."

Once more in his room, he told himself that good fortune was now his, success attended him on every hand. The old doubt, he thought, the old restless searching, had been vanquished. He remembered, with a superior smile, his father, coatless and commonplace, on his cramped porch; the meanness of that narrow, bricked prospect; the turgid smell of boiling cabbage. Here, the glittering white bathroom, crumpled money on a dressing case, cretonne drapery, were the symbols of his own ability and wisdom.

XIII

KATA ENGELD came out early to the beach and he walked back to meet her. The contrast between his eagerness to greet Etta, the involuntary stir at his heart when she approached, and his present emotional indifference, seemed to Cobbett to indicate his growth above ephemeral considerations. Kata's eyes were like blue flowers in the early dew. She whispered to him that she had slept but little, thinking of her new happiness.

He sat gravely beside her on the sand, with Milton Madlon gabbling in his ear, and told Kata again of all that he planned to be.

Plint appeared and, with Cobbett's perfunctory assistance, dragged the surfboat to the edge of the tide. Then Plint re-coiled the life-can line and addressed himself to the day's duty. He had, Cobbett noticed, a bandage about his left foot. Plint limped; but to the younger's query he made an abrupt reply. The fellowship between them had entirely dissolved. Cobbett stood for an awkward moment by the other's side; Plint gazed fixedly out to sea, and he left impatiently. Cobbett returned to Kata and the golden future. . . . It was clear that Plint would always remain in an inferior capacity.

"Where, in the Name of Chaucer, Did You Get This Comprehension, This Sympathetic Penetration of Life?"

"Isn't it a scream about the Chinaman?" Kata said. "I really think Bessie is tremendously concerned. Mrs. Tamm just dresses her head off at him; but Vida Madlon's worse than any of the others. Fong seems interested in Vida too; but it's so difficult to know with him. It's the queerest thing about those three cold potatoes and Fong H'Tai. I've never seen a man reach them before."

The day, a blazing blue expanse of sea and sky, declined from its zenith to a paler silken shimmer, and at five o'clock Cobbett left the beach. He had dressed, and was standing irresolutely before the Madlon cottage, when he saw the short, awkward figure of Sidney Engeld descend his broad white steps. The latter waved to him sharply with a short, clumsy arm—the entire man was like that, small and thick, with a waddling gait and a round, placid countenance. Cobbett thought, as he crossed the street, that he had never seen Sidney Engeld palpably disturbed before.

"I want to speak with you," he declared. "No; come up on my porch." He led Cobbett up on the sweeping, stately veranda, above the brilliant sward, where Engeld stood unimpressive to the point of the ridiculous. "What have you been telling to little Kata?" he asked. "What is this rubbish I hear about an engagement?"

"It's not rubbish," Cobbett answered sharply, confidently. "We have made a very good arrangement and hope to be married early in the winter."

"Rubbish! Rubbish!" the other reiterated, striking his fist on his palm. "Do you think for a minute I'd let Kata—Kata, my little crystal—marry you? Why, you're crazy!"

"You're wrong again," Cobbett told him with a consciousness of admirable patience. "I'll make a very good husband. You see, I'm in right already."

"I know what that means too," Sidney Engeld retorted in a rising temper. "Kata told me all that you have said to her. Do you see this place?" he asked with a violent, sweeping gesture. "Well, it's me! I made it, every stick of it; and there's another, too, nicer. I made it, every shingle, in honest commerce. It's all of us—Kata and me and Bessie and mamma. No dirty politician don't have a string on us; we're free! And you come for my flower with your talk of 'in right'!—the café—low saloon—you got; the power you're going to be.

"You're not much!" he said, sudden and calm. "I know about these things. You keep away from Kata! She's a good, obedient child, and it won't do you nothing not to; but don't you bother her. Let me tell you this, since you are only a boy: You couldn't be worse in! Get something to do, something to make—useful or beautiful, it doesn't matter," said little Engeld. "I got pictures and books in my house; and I got bread and toothbrushes—it doesn't matter. I give you that because you're young."

The ridiculous fat fool, Cobbett Gannon thought; the little dull Dutchman; the stupid plodder! Sidney Engeld advising him, correcting Roscoe Madlon, was beyond thought. Kata, he recognized without a sigh, was gone. As her father had said, she was a good girl. Perhaps it was better like that—no women. He wouldn't bother her, he told the short, perturbed man.

"You are dead!" he advised Engeld. "Your eyes never opened."

There was a sort of answering dignity apparent, even to Cobbett, in the unwieldy, ludicrous figure.

"I'm honest!" he said, and went deliberately into the house.

Cobbett, first angry, grew vaguely disturbed—Engeld's was the first question raised against the future he had planned. Of course the other was a donkey; and yet there had been an impressive quality in Sidney Engeld's bearing, in his pronouncement of the word honest. But he—Cobbett—was honest too; there was no necessity to shout it to the sky. And what was that about his property—a low saloon? In spite of Madlon's advice he would see it, confer with the tenant, if the place needed improvement. . . . He mounted the steps of the Madlon cottage, conscious that he would be late for dinner.

At the table there was a most extraordinary silent tension—Roscoe Madlon was glooming at his plate; Vida sat upright, with a bright, unnaturally natural spot of color on each cheek; Mrs. Madlon had collapsed like a punctured, dull balloon. Only Milton was sparkling with suppressed excitement and enigmatic grins. Vida Madlon said, as Cobbett took his place:

"I think we need discuss this no more here."

"It'll be discussed, all right, in every crossroads of the state," Madlon declared. "Why, I believe it will kill me for Washington—Roscoe Madlon's sister married to a Chinaman!"

"How we'll ever hold up our heads, I don't know!" Mrs. Madlon declared weakly. "You unnatural girl!" she said to Vida. "What kind of children will there be? Let me ask you that! Likely striped yellow and white. It turns my stomach over like a griddle."

"I have been most fortunate," Vida replied evenly; "a cultivated and rich prince ——"

"Prince Yip Yip!" Madlon declared savagely. "Prince No Checkee, No Shirtee. Hell! I'm going to Europe."

XIV

COBBETT woke during the night and heard the loud beating of a rising sea; a wind was sweeping through his room, cold and solid. He shivered involuntarily and a formless dejection seized him; nebulous doubts flapped like slow black birds through his thoughts. In the morning the sky was low and gray, like a sagging, dirty canvas, and a northeast half gale swept the sea, a ponderous, white-scarred element, diagonally over the sand. The wind drove masses of faintly iridescent foam from the waves skittering across the beach, and collecting in a shuddering mass in an angle of the sea wall.

Cobbett drew his beach coat over his bare shoulders. It was on such a day as this that he had won his appointment. He had a sudden desire for a return of the old, familiar bond with Plint; but when he asked the other how his foot was he only grunted and turned toward the sea. Only a few bathed throughout the morning, knee-deep in the swirling current. Cobbett's dejection, supported by the sullen day, persisted; he saw in it the ending of summer, the impending bitter winds of November. Infrequently the sun showed like a tin plate in a smother of steam; nothing else marked the passage of the hours.

He had huddled behind the surfboat, with a whipping sheet of the daily local paper, and was studying the predictions

for coming elections when his attention was caught by a sensational heading:

"Dead From Heroin in a Dollar Bill!"

He read on until suddenly a mere interest became painful concentration: "Party of five. . . . Drug supplied by a cabaret performer. Removed to hospital, where the victim, Gene Fisher, died shortly after from effects." What had stirred him was the fact that it had occurred in the café Roscoe Madlon had transferred to him—in his place! "The drinking place, one of the lowest in the city, will be the object of special investigation," the description continued. "Such places must go, the city fathers declare. Others of the number, treated at their homes, are on the road to recovery. Edwin Poffenmager ——" He gave an involuntary gasp—the Custard!—and then hurriedly searched the column of print. Almost immediately he found what subconsciously he was looking for: "The third victim, Mae Lanty, is in a less satisfactory condition."

The wind tore the sheet from his unresisting fingers. Mae Lanty! Suddenly he cursed the Custard, the criminal fool with his witless parties. Heroin in a funnel made of a dollar bill, supplied by a cabaret dancer in his place! Mae —— He started to his feet and, turning from the riven sea, fled from the beach. In a few minutes he was dressed, his mind filled with memories of Mae Lanty—gay, laughing Mae, who was going to be one of the Gilded Girls of burlesque.

The Lantys occupied one of a row of diminutive brick houses at the rear of a towering apartment. Cobbett found the door open and a brother-in-law of Mae in the small, musty parlor. He was a thin, pallid man—an assistant engineer in one of the great hotels, with steel-bowed spectacles and swollen red-and-black finger joints.

"It's bad," he told Cobbett Gannon. "And she was going out this week with a show company. It seems the drug numbed her, like. She's as dull as if she was a connecting rod that needed rubbing up. No; the doctor won't guarantee nothing.

"Them places are fierce!" he continued in a hopeless voice. "I had to go down there this morning and the very air'd make a person draw back. . . . Nigger performers! Mae just took the stuff for a lark. The paper says about an investigation; but what's that to them back of joints like that? What's Mae Lanty?"

Cobbett sat crushing his hat in white, straining hands. Mae—dulled, her youth numbed. He remembered her gay voice singing. And in his place! Roscoe Madlon had counseled him not to go near it; prudence was the better part of that ownership. The blackness of soul that he had thought forever left behind rose bitterly about him; the feeling of being lost in a maze—a mocking iron trap decked in tinsel. He rose and left, wandering instinctively toward the beach he had abruptly deserted.

The possible ruin of Mae Lanty followed him like the thin lash of a whip. He made an effort to regain his composure, to conduct himself in keeping with the superior part that was to have been his. One girl more or less —— It was an abject failure. In some manner Roscoe Madlon kept separated from such accidents. He couldn't. The thing cut at him persistently, cruelly. Mae Lanty dancing like the beam of light that had followed her over the floor!

Still, he told himself, he had had nothing to do with the unfortunate occurrence. Such things happened continually; if he made himself miserable every time —— But they had never happened before in a place of his. He had over a hundred dollars in his pocket now that it had brought him. He had taken it with a vague idea of pressing it upon Mae's family. But there the actual worthlessness of money had been borne upon him. It couldn't make Mae Lanty gay again. Cobbett had a sudden impulse to fling the bills and silver into the gutter. It would never get him what he personally needed; it would never save him from the black waters.

The street on which he lived, the beach beyond, opened sharply before him. He saw a small group, buffeted by the wind, gathered at the edge of the crawling, dark tide. A sudden shrinking of his heart, an inchoate dread, sent him forward in a stumbling run. There were some women in cloaks, tense men, an uneven length of canvas spread on the sand. Cobbett, with weakening legs, went up to the group.

"Do You Mean That This Is the End, Now?" He Demanded Bitterly

The beach captain with the gray bristling mustache stood regarding him with twitching hands, eyes of ice. He heard a restrained sobbing, and erratically Cobbett's mind returned to the sobbing he had once heard in a café, with Mae Lanty. The captain made a gesture toward the spread canvas covering.

"Plint!" he said in a hard voice. A strange tone added: "Dead! . . . In heroic service." Cobbett's hat had blown away and his hair stirred restlessly. A more terrible loneliness than he had ever known before descended upon him. "His foot hindered him—alone!"

An overwhelming envy of Plint seized him—Plint, whom he had secretly despised, deserted, crowned with the supreme honor of humanity; folded in peace. Cobbett's youth dried up in him like a broken green stalk. More than anything else he wanted to speak to Plint, who had been his companion; to explain that he had been blind.

XV

COBBETT GANNON entered the Pier—without the formality of a purchased admission—with a firm tread. It was late in September; a warm haze lay like a transparent gold cloud on the still sea; and the earlier throngs on the Boardwalk had dwindled to a leisurely line progressing in each direction. It was past five, the music had finished for the afternoon, and a small, scattered gathering was making its way out. Cobbett passed beyond the dancing hall and a second pavilion to a bench with an unbounded vista of light and sea.

His countenance was perceptibly older; there were some faint lines about his eyes; his mouth, always well defined, was held in a somber line; his gaze was unsmiling, reserved. His sheer youth had gone; he seemed closer knit, to move with a deliberation — partly, at least, the result of thought and not mere impulse. Cobbett had lost his careless bearing, even some of his elasticity; but he had gained a certain aspect in keeping with his dark, quiet dress.

He laid his hat beside him and produced from a pocket a crumpled, clipped half column from a newspaper. This he read; and as his gaze dropped down the paper slip an expression of satisfaction deepened to actual pleasure. He looked up, gazing abstractedly over the shimmering water. His expression changed again. It became now absolute determination; his jaw had knotted beneath his thin, dark cheeks with the force of his mental projection. He sat so still that he might have been an effigy in colored bronze of keen, young manhood.

A sudden sharp sound disturbed him, and he saw that a girl, seated on the next bench, had dropped a heavy gray book. He rose, bending forward, and secured it, returning the volume to its owner. As he did this, instinctively he glanced at the title; but, beyond the fact that the author had a long, obviously foreign name, he gathered nothing. The girl had evidently noticed his interest, for she said:

"It's splendid, isn't it?"

"I don't know," he replied.

Her voice was cultivated, low and warm, and he surveyed her with a direct, impersonal gaze. The result was surprising; her appearance was utterly incongruous with an obviously serious book. She was, he saw, entirely "smart," from her flat white shoes and dully striped skirt to her severe, soft straw hat, with its turned-down rim. She was, too, generally young. But there was an air, intangible and yet palpable, that stamped her as an exclusive, frivolous being. She belonged to a class that he knew largely spent itself in the pursuit of pleasure. They were only here for a little while—in fall and spring; moving north or south with an equable, pleasant climate. He had thought her frivolous; but now, with her eyes turned upon him, he was conscious of a serious quality in them that left him doubtful. Here, he admitted, was a being about whom he could conjecture little.

"A Russian," she explained; "and one of the greatest writers who ever lived."

She spoke of the book with a quality of enthusiasm surprising in that connection. He had never before known a girl who had read anything but limp, saccharine fictions; when here was one who regarded a heavy book with an unpronounceable name as he had thought the feminine world looked only on adornment. It kindled an answering, appropriate response within himself.

"I'd like to read it," he told her.

She held it so that he could see the title.

"By all means," she urged him.

"I would like to write a book," he abruptly confided to her. "I'm only a reporter, and I haven't been that for a month; but it's surprising how it takes hold of you." He produced again the crumpled half column and tendered it to her with a motion of unconscious pride. "I wrote that," he said, "and it was put in just like I had it. The first."

She took it willingly and read it, holding the slip in slim, precise fingers.

"But, really," she exclaimed at the end, "it is awfully good!" A warm glow stained his thin cheeks. "It's—it's so human; and you have a wonderful eye for bits. What I like best," she went on, her arm resting on the back of the bench with an entire lack of self-consciousness, "is the way you know all those poor things huddled on the beach. You're very young to understand life like that."

His face grew somber again.

"I've seen more of it than some others," he told her. "I've made the kind of mistakes that wake you up."

He stopped awkwardly—he had not intended to bring his person before a stranger interested merely in an insignificant production. However, her expression was sympathetic.

"Do some more like that," she advised.

"Yes; I am," he returned, once more happily. "They liked that pretty well on the paper. I just report the hotel arrivals, but I wanted to try that beach stuff. They'll print another"

His tone expressed a little of the wonder of this. She smiled comprehendingly. How quick she was, he thought; how keen and how kind!

He Sat Beside Kate on the Sand and Told Her Again of All That He Planned to Be

(Continued on Page 38)

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

FOUNDED A: D: 1728

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY BY

THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY

INDEPENDENCE SQUARE
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, U.S.A.

GEORGE HORACE LORIMER, EDITOR

By Subscription $1 50 the Year. Five Cents the Copy of All Newsdealers.
To Canada—By Subscription $1 75 the Year. Single Copies, Five Cents.
Foreign Subscriptions: For Countries in the Postal Union. Single Subscriptions, $3 25. Remittances to be Made by International Postal Money Order

PHILADELPHIA, DECEMBER 23, 1916

Better Credit Machinery

CREDIT is one of the country merchant's chief afflictions. He does not sell on time, but on eternity. In many cases when he hands over an armful of goods and charges it the implied terms of the sale are that the buyer shall pay when it is convenient. Often he buys on the same indefinite terms. The goods are billed to him at sixty or ninety days; but that is not regarded as a definite obligation. He pays when he can. So there is always outstanding on the books of jobbers, wholesalers and retailers an immense amount of indeterminate and more or less questionable credit that is subject to a heavy discount and high interest charges when it is converted into bank credit.

Trade acceptances would turn a large part of this from a bad credit instrument into a good credit instrument. If retailer owes wholesaler a thousand dollars on open book account, the wholesaler can borrow from the bank, on the basis of that asset, seven or eight hundred dollars, at six per cent. But if retailer gave wholesaler a trade acceptance for a thousand dollars, the wholesaler could discount that at the bank for its full face value, at five per cent, or perhaps less.

That this arrangement would react to the benefit of the retailer seems clear. It would also, we believe, help the retailer to introduce a definite credit system on the selling side. He sees mail-order houses doing a business of one hundred million or two hundred million dollars a year on a strictly cash basis. He must know that so long as he buys and sells on indeterminate credit he will be at a disadvantage.

No one should be more interested than he in the introduction of a system whereby, when a dollar's worth of goods is sold on time, a dollar's worth of bank credit, realizable at low interest rates, results from the sale. The Federal Reserve Banks and the National Association of Credit Men are working for general use of trade acceptances. It is a good work.

Post-Election Watchfulness

THEY wanted your votes a little while ago. They talked to you very earnestly about their devotion to the commonweal, and the crucial necessity of electing them rather than the other fellows.

Well, there they are now—a Senate and a House of Representatives—with a short session before them, in which much business of real public importance will press for consideration.

Will they go at it with an eye to the commonweal and a sense of the high trust with which you have vested them? Will they try to be economical of time and money? Will they subordinate mere politics of the personal, factional, partisan and grand-stand sorts to genuine and urgent public business?

Watch them, with their campaign appeals for your support fresh in mind. Usually you do not watch them. They function in a twilight, amid which only a few details clearly appear—they being quite often of a disappointing character. Watch them this time. See how they expedite or delay the important business before them; what their attitude is toward economical handling of your money; how much time they give to their own purely selfish affair of jockeying for political advantage.

We hope your watching will be pleasurably rewarded. But if they disappoint you, know it and remember it.

The Opposition

ALL last summer and autumn, you remember, the Republicans said it was very necessary to put the Republican Party in power, because that party was not only much abler than the Democrats, but much more sincerely devoted to national well-being.

As it happens, voters did not put the Republicans in power, but left the Democrats in that position, though by a very narrow margin in both houses of Congress.

Naturally the question arises: How are the Republicans now going to demonstrate their superior ability and higher devotion to national well-being?

Will they put their ability at the service of the government, which happens to be in the hands of their opponents? Will they prove that they have statesmanship by assisting to the utmost in the dispatch of important public business and in a broad-minded solution of public problems? They are in a position where they may make a good deal of trouble—to the nation—in a hope that it will react upon the Democrats. Will they put national interest above selfish interest?

In opposition the Republicans have the same opportunity to prove their ability and devotion that they would have in power. Why should either party have the face to ask public support if it will try whole-heartedly to serve the public only when it has won? Opposition can be constructive, progressive, patriotic.

If Republican opposition is not these, its campaign talk was obviously mere buncombe.

Framing the Great Picture

A BILL before Congress proposes that the Grand Cañon of the Colorado shall be made a National Park. Of course it ought to pass. The Grand Cañon is Nature's masterpiece. So far we have simply tacked it to the wall, and have even let it be smeared up here and there. The nation owns it; but merely as a monument, without the dignity, protection and development that are implied in being a National Park. As the greatest of our scenic possessions it should, as a matter of course, be put in the first rank.

In some rather small ways we could wish the Government would strike a little higher note with regard to all the National Parks. It is too indulgent to the national indifference to sightliness. It does not seem to be aware that purblind people, who leave a generous litter of tin cans, rumpled newspapers, refuse food, and like unpleasant objects, in their wake, are keeping their hats on in church, and need to have their manners corrected.

An effective driving home of the idea that pleasure in visiting the Parks is not heightened by unsightly buildings and garbage in the landscape would be a good thing.

How to Find the Poor

YOU live in a comfortable neighborhood. All those you call your neighbors have comfortable habitations, plenty to eat, and good clothes. Quite likely you think of poverty as something at a distance, which you must go considerably out of your way to find. But every day you are stepping over knee-deep poverty, as a man crosses a puddle on stepping-stones.

The maid in your kitchen; the man who is digging a ditch in the street in front of your house; those who come to your door delivering things; the woman who is scrubbing the corridor when you leave your office a bit late; the boy from whom you buy your evening newspaper—all those who work for a small wage and live among people of small, uncertain incomes—are rubbing elbows with poverty daily. They personally know of cases where the bread-winner is ill; where the mother leaves young children at home and goes out for day's work. Only an age-long system of exclusive groupings keeps us from being miserably aware of poverty within reach of our hand at every moment.

A sour thought, you say? You can make it more palatable by a good gift to the poor. The best of all gifts—maybe the only really good gift—is that which carries something of yourself along with the money. Organized giving to the poor is a shameful necessity. There is nothing now to take its place, and you can't escape an obligation by pleading that organized giving is only a substitute for real charity.

Give to the organization; or, better still, add your own time and direct sympathy to the money, and give intelligently at first hand.

The Other Side of It

WE MENTIONED recently that a concern which had many applications for low-salaried jobs was looking in vain for some men to fill high-salaried jobs. Among the scores of letters which that mentioning provoked, several make the sound point that thousands of men capable of filling five-thousand-dollar positions are working for decidedly less, simply because they have not happened to get into contact with a chain of circumstances which would have led them to the five-thousand-dollar desk.

If they had chanced to get into A's shop, which is an expanding, forward-looking concern, instead of into B's, where the currents are sluggish, they would be getting five thousand instead of two. Over in B's shop to-day there is very likely a man who, with some little preparation, could fill A's vacant five-thousand-dollar position very acceptably; but A does not know of him, and he does not know of A.

This is undoubtedly true. Nobody but a blockhead denies the large part chance plays in human affairs. Perhaps the man of extraordinary force compels opportunity to wait upon him; but he is the exception. The other man, who is industrious and able, will succeed; he will win the best position that opportunity opens to him; but opportunity may be niggardly with him. It is not true that the man who gets five thousand is two and a half times as able as the man who gets two thousand.

The supreme trick is to make opportunity as free as possible; to give all the talent the openest possible chance at all the jobs. A few of our correspondents think they know how to turn that trick; but we are rather dubious.

Meantime, however, every concern that is looking for talent will do well to take a wide look, and not one just down the beaten path.

Compulsion and Coöperation

SCIENTIFIC persons have been telling us these many years, with greater and greater emphasis, that man is a gregarious animal, always living in herds and utterly dependent upon his fellows for life. It is broadly true, all the same, that men will never coöperate until they are compelled to do so. They will go it alone just as much as they are able. It was a threat of starvation that forced the Rochdale weavers to begin that joint buying movement in England which is now the world's greatest cooperative enterprise. Dire necessity drove German farmers into the coöperations that have done so much to transform agriculture in the Fatherland. Numberless coöperative concerns have been started in this country. As a rule, they have failed in all cases where it has not convincingly appeared that coöperation was the only alternative to bankruptcy. Unless they had to, people simply would not stick together.

Lately the principle has been demonstrated on an amazing scale in Europe. Individualistic England has handed over to the government complete control of all railroads, of nearly all shipping, of a large part of manufactures. Government has taken over much of the food trade and appointed a food dictator on the German plan. The time seems to be near at hand when, broadly speaking, an Englishman will work when and where the government tells him to, and eat what the government prescribes. These steps are taken because everybody sees what ruthless coöperation has done in enabling Germany to meet the war.

Rather singular, is it not? Experience seems to show that when you are in the direst straits coöperation will save you; yet you will have as little as possible to do with it unless you are in straits. It would seem that so efficient an instrument was worth experimenting with in a more cordial spirit when there was no absolute necessity to adopt it.

There is probably less coöperation in this country among farmers and retail merchants than in any other big lines. We suspect they are overlooking something.

A Good Kind of Epidemic

USUALLY the town is so arranged that a litter of ragtag and bobtail along the railroad is what gives the incoming passenger his first impression. But usually nowadays the railroad station itself will be a neat brick structure, cleanly kept, pleasant to look at, with a bit of park beside or behind it.

Some years ago that railroad station was an ugly red shed, considerably dilapidated and weather-beaten, with a rotting plank walk and a spacious border of mud and cinders. The railroad company discovered that it could not afford to present itself to the public in that guise of a barrel-house bum; that wearing a decent coat and clean collar helped its business.

The town is slow in discovering that. It has a sense of the importance of sightliness, for it is always improving Main Street, laying out a park, adorning the best residence thoroughfares. But it does not wash the back of its neck and brush its shoes. It does little to discourage litter and ugliness, for which there is no good excuse. It lets private property owners maintain all sorts of gross ocular nuisances. If a place smells rotten it intervenes. Why not intervene when the place looks rotten?

We should like to see a regular epidemic of campaigns for tidying up all round. Why not begin with your town?

SHOESTRINGS

By Maximilian Foster

ILLUSTRATED BY MAY WILSON PRESTON

XXIII

THE remainder of Miss Minch's day in San Diego, though she stayed there almost until nightfall, seemed to have little relation to the morning's singular adventure. For a lady who had just learned that she had probably suffered the loss of funds she'd invested her air seemed curiously bland and indifferent.

Having left the brokerage office, Miss Minch next repaired to a drug store. Here, after purchasing an orange stick, a paper of gumdrops and a powder puff, she refreshed herself with a chocolate sundae. This consumed, she quit the drug store, and subsequently was to be seen studying the notices and photographs in the window of a near-by real-estate office: "Orange Ranch. A Snap. Four Acres. Only $2000 an Acre. Be Quick if You Want It!" Evidently no one had been quick enough, for the sign was now torn and faded. "Bijou Bungalow. Only Seven Thousand. Just the Home for You and Her. Half Down, the Rest on Your Own Time." "What You're Looking For! Swell Neighborhood. Four-Room Bungalow. Kitchenette and Garage. $3000."

What seemed to catch Miss Minch's attention the most was a two-story Queen Anne cottage with fretwork trimmings, peaked windows and a porch. It had a garden in front. In the garden was a cactus plant and a palm tree that looked like a large vegetable duster. For that matter, though, all the houses shown had a palm tree and a cactus in front. They might have nothing else, but always they had these. The front porch, however, especially held Miss Minch's attention.

A gorgeous Cherokee rose trailed all over it. On the steps was a large hobby horse. One of its hind legs was absent. Its tail also was gone. "Price, $4000. Half Down."

She was gazing at it intently, when a fat man in a linen duster and automobile goggles saw her and leaving the office came hurrying out.

"Home seeking, lady? Got just what you want. Step in, madam."

Her air vague, Miss Minch replied she was "Just looking." It made little difference to the linen duster, though. "Children?" he inquired briskly; and still vague, Miss Minch was absently murmuring "Not as yet," when flushing furiously she darted away. Ere the fat man had recovered from his astonishment she had turned the corner and was gone.

The remainder of her day was as immaterial. At one o'clock she lunched. A modest sandwich and a glass of milk sufficed her, after which she crossed the street, and fishing into her purse for a dime she plunged into the gloom of a moving-picture show. The title of the film, a five-reel drama, was Love Will Find the Way, but for two hours and a half Love had a pretty rough time of it. However, after several train wrecks, quite a little shooting, the burning of a house, a daring plunge from a cliff and a quick leap from a runaway automobile, the fluffy-haired heroine seized the missing will from the villain, who then shot himself on a leather couch in his fashionable bachelor apartments. When hero and heroine had been shown in the final kiss, Miss Minch arose.

"Junk!" she said, and glanced at her watch.

It was now nearly five o'clock, and having consumed the last of her gumdrops she wandered out.

At five she took the car to the ferry. At half past five she was aboard the boat. Just as six o'clock struck, walking idly, Miss Minch strolled up the path that led to the bungalow's front door. Her air was now covertly elated. Evidently Miss Minch was pleased with herself and her day. Smiling grimly, she let herself into the bungalow.

All was as she had left it. The party as yet had not returned; and Suki, too, seemed chiefly evident by his absence. However, having lit the lights and removed her hat and jacket, Miss Minch wandered to the writing desk near the window. There was a telephone on the writing table, and as she saw it she seemed to remember something. Picking it up, she called a number in San Diego.

"This is Miss Minch," she said; "Miss J. Minch. You remember I engaged six lowers for Tuesday midnight. It's to San Francisco. In addition I'd like a drawing room saved, if you have it." Apparently the person in question had it. "The name?" inquired Miss Minch. "Why, Mr. and Mrs. Babbett—Joseph Babbett."

She was just about to hang up, when she seemed to remember something else:

"Just one thing more, please. Was it for Tuesday Mr. Lubin reserved that upper? You'd better cancel it. He's not going Tuesday."

Then as she hung up the receiver Miss Minch murmured something else:

"Not with us, I'll bet, anyway."

Miss Minch Next Repaired to a Drug Store and Refreshed Herself With a Chocolate Sundae

Eight o'clock had just struck. There was a moon, but it had not risen yet; and darkness, a deep, impenetrable gloom, hung over the wayside olives and palms. However, long before they neared the bungalow the rising murmur of voices gave the signal who approached. Jarring and shrill, the voices pierced through the night.

Miss Minch was still at the writing desk. After telephoning, her attention had been attracted to some scraps of paper lying in the waste-paper basket. There were a large number of them and, picking them out, she had been laboriously piecing them together. The writing on them was only fragmentary.

One began: "Interesting to the Social World," and ended there. Another read: "Leading the social calendar and important among its events——" While a third had scribbled on it: "Agog over the coming lawn fête, which gossip whispers——" That was all, though. The other scraps were covered with figures.

One set of figures had been set down over and over again. The figures were 14,560; and having first been multiplied by ten, then two decimals being marked off, it was next multiplied by fifty-two. A dollar sign preceded the result.

As there are fifty-two weeks in the year, Miss Minch concluded eventually that the writer must have been figuring the year's income on fourteen thousand at ten per cent a week; and reaching the conclusion, she winked at herself in the glass.

"Trying to Double-Cross Me! Don't You Dast, Mr. Lubin, to Say It!"

Yachts, villas, picture galleries and private cars! All that on fourteen thousand, even at ten per cent a week? She winked again. Evidently Miss Minch was in high feather at something; and grinning pleasantly she had just dumped the papers back into the basket, when through the open window there came to her that rising murmur of voices.

The next instant her grin died. She started, staring. Her look was as if something had just come tumbling about her ears. Plans possibly. Little schemes, perhaps.

"Huh?" inquired Miss Minch.

Mrs. Wallop was in the lead. A block away her voice rose shrilly.

"Be nice!" she warned. "Be nice!"

Mrs. Niblo was heard to respond:

"Speak for yourself, madam. The way you carried on with him was disgusting. I wouldn't wonder if you was tampering with Niblo too."

"Well, I never!" Mrs. Wallop was ejaculating, adding, "If Buck was here you wouldn't dast!" when Mrs. Tumulty's voice broke in:

"You just set out from the first to get it! You knew it was the one we meant to buy."

"Yeah," added Mr. Tumulty's voice, "marrying him to get it off us!"

"I ain't saying anything," said another voice, "only I got my opinion of some others I could name too! Getting in on the groun' floor—trying to freeze out his friends! Well, why don't you say something, Tams?"

Tams, apparently, had nothing to say.

"'S right!" said the voice, Mr. Poulsen's evidently. "Waitin' to slip it to the swells, wasn't you? Dumpin' your old pals, people that was good to you, so's you could get next to that grass widow!"

Miss Minch was darting to the door, when the door opened and Susie Negley flew in.

"Oh, Miss Minch!" cried Susie; and dropping into a convenient chair the young lady covered her face with her handkerchief. Outside, Mr. Poulsen was still speaking.

"Yah!" he was saying. "Yah!"

"Susie Negley," said Miss Minch, her voice cracking, "what in the world has happened?"

"What's happened?" echoed Susie, her voice rising. "What's happened? You ask me what's happened? You?"

Susie emerged from her handkerchief to stare tearfully.

"Wasn't it you that did it all? You knew Joe was here—you'd seen him! Wasn't it you that cooked up that scheme? You thought if I led on some swell Joe'd get jealous, then

(Continued on Page 23)

United States
"ROYAL CORD"
Tires

There are three big reasons why you should use United States 'Royal Cord' Tires in preference to any other cord tire.

1. Construction: The 'Royal Cord' is the very last word of modern scientific design and manufacture in cord tires.

The 'Royal Cord' is not made of only a few cable-like cords but of many twenties layers of powerful, lighter weight cords—which form of construction makes the heavier and stronger tire wall for which Royal Cords are famous.

2. Tread: The 'Royal Cord' actually possesses unusual anti-skid and remarkable high-traction qualities.

Note carefully the three ribs running around the periphery of the tire—the two outer ribs protect to give high traction, and the three ribs giving the anti-skid qualities for which Royal Cords are famous.

3. Accomplishment: In the test of use 'Royal Cords' show marked superiority among cord tires in low-mileage cost.

One example—the recent Hudson Super Six world's-record run from San Francisco to New York and back to San Francisco—nearly 7,000 miles was made on 'Royal Cords,' which gave what the drivers called "perfect service"—no tire trouble whatever.

United States 'Royal Cord' Tires are demonstrating, in accomplishments never before equalled in any other cord tire, that their construction and tread are right.

United States Tire Company

(Continued from Page 21)

ne'd come to his senses. That's what you did! Yes, and you told Joe that if some swell got after me the swell'd drop me as soon as he found out I hadn't anything; then I'd be glad to get him back—get Joe! Yes, you did! Now, see what you've done! Oh, oh!" said Susie, resuming her tears and handkerchief.

Miss Minch waited a moment.

"Stop that sniveling, Susie! You tell me what has happened."

For a moment Susie stayed her tears.

"What's happened? I've told you what, haven't I? Joe's punched Mr. Alsop's eye because Mr. Alsop proposed to me. Then Mr. Alsop got mad, and he's told everyone we're nothing but a lot of pikers—that's what he called us, pikers! I heard him say so to Mrs. Gladdis, that widow Mr. Tams is going to marry!"

"Going to marry?" echoed Miss Minch.

"Yes, but that's nothing," sobbed Susie. "Mr. Lubin's had a fight with Mr. Jarboe—it's because Mrs. Wallop's engaged to him—engaged to Mr. Jarboe; and Poulsen's mad because Tams is in partners with Mr. Lubin, only I don't know why. So's Mr. Poulsen in with him—with Lubin—only that's nothing either!"

"Nothing?" inquired Miss Minch.

"Oh, no, no," sobbed Susie. "Joe's furious, and he says I was a fool ever to listen to you!"

"Oh, Joe said that, did he?" remarked Miss Minch.

"Yes," wailed Susie. "He said I could marry a swell—he didn't care!"

"Yes," said Miss Minch; "but just what was it you said now about Tams and that Widow Gladdis?"

"Oh, her?" sniffed Susie. "They're going to be married right off. That's nothing, either."

"Well, it's something," said Miss Minch, her voice queer. "What else?"

A snort escaped her, and Susie stared at her, scandalized.

"Oh, how can you laugh, Miss Minch? Joe says he'll never speak to me again. He says I'm fooling him the way I've been fooling Alsop."

"All right," said Miss Minch. "And then what?"

"Joe's left me," choked Susie. "He's gone back to San Francisco."

XXIV

THE two days that passed—the Sunday and Monday that intervened between Mr. Lubin's yachting party and the lawn fête planned by Mr. Tams—sped rapidly. Marked by a number of unusual occurrences, the forty-eight hours whizzed by.

The situation at the bungalow was in itself peculiar. At any rate, as the host, Mr. Tams to his wonder found himself surrounded by a houseful of guests, few of whom were on speaking terms with one another, or, for that matter, on speaking terms with him. Indeed, Mr. Lubin's well-meant and charming hospitality seemed to have had the most curious results imaginable. Embroiled in these, Mr. Tams was little short of aghast.

Thus, having in a mild way sought to adjust the differences between Mrs. Wallop and the two Tumultys, both Mr. Tumulty and his lady had advised him to hold his tongue, it was not any business of his. The fact that it wasn't Mrs. Niblo also confirmed. Ranged on the Tumultys' side, it was her opinion that they'd all been a pack of fools ever to have accepted Tams' invitation. Besides, what did they expect to get out of it? All her best impulses had warned her not to come, and how did she know what was happening to Niblo. What if some designing woman, too, had him in her power! As she spoke she glared at Mrs. Wallop.

Madam herself had just appeared from the kitchen. An apron on and a large kitchen spoon in her hand, she had just been showing Suki a new recipe for cabinet pudding. As she appeared she was tasting from the spoon.

"Niblo, eh?" said Mrs. Wallop darkly. "Why, Buck'd make a meal of him!"

Her air triumphant, she returned to the kitchen again.

However, this was not all. Besides the Tumultys and Mrs. Niblo, who were not speaking to Mrs. Wallop and Mr. Tams, Miss Negley was not speaking to Miss Minch, while Mr. Poulsen was not speaking to anyone. It was generally understood that Susie and Miss Minch had fallen into trouble over Joe Babbett and Mr. Alsop, Joe having miraculously appeared from somewhere, then as instantly disappeared. So had Mr. Alsop. He had not been seen since the yachting party. As for Mr. Poulsen, he was almost constantly plunged in thought. And he seemed perpetually to perspire.

Of all of them, though, Miss Minch's manner seemed the most remarkable. Silenced for once, it looked as if she were dazed. All through Sunday she clung to her bedroom, again pleading a headache. Then early Monday morning, in response to a telephone message, she hurriedly donned hat and jacket and as hurriedly departed for San Diego. Where she was going she did not say; but that afternoon Mr. Poulsen, who had gone over to San Diego to look at a large office building he was intending to buy, was astonished to see Miss Minch emerge from an office in a building across the way.

Mr. Poulsen no longer considered going into the auto business. Realty, such as bank buildings and town sites, was now his choice. However, having looked over a few offerings in the neighborhood he was saying to the agent he'd let him know in a few days, when he saw Miss Minch. With her were two persons—men. Each wore a black slouch hat and heavy shoes; and each gripped in his jaw the remains of a black cigar. At the corner they parted from Miss Minch, making their way toward the San Diego post office. Into this they disappeared. Miss Minch then took the car to the ferry.

But to return to the bungalow and to Mr. Tams. Early Sunday morning he rose and dressed with feverish haste. By now he had bought himself a new silk hat, his other having been wrecked in the rescue of Miss Pickell, daughter of the Burlingame Pickells. As the day was Sunday, he donned this and the braided morning coat. Hurrying out, he returned presently with a large bunch of roses in his hand. The roses were wrapped in tissue paper, having also a sheet of tinfoil round the stems; and with them in his hand, once he'd breakfasted, he again set forth. About eleven he returned.

White, moist, buried in thought, for the rest of the day he remained at home. Twice he telephoned. The results, however, seemed to depress him even more. "Not at home?" he repeated dully. And after the second attempt he telephoned no more. Drawing up a chair to the writing table, he took pencil and paper, and still white and silent occupied himself with writing.

What he scribbled were those perpetual figures: 14,560 × 10 × 52. Thus passed Sunday. Thus passed the greater part of Monday too. On Monday, several times during the day, he again telephoned, but without result. Then, late Monday evening with a cry of agitation Mr. Tams rose suddenly. In his hand was the evening newspaper. He had for the first time looked at it. The paper was opened at the social column.

"Look!" cried Mr. Tams. "Oh, look!"

The Tumultys, with them Mrs. Niblo, had gone out. They had been telephoned to after dinner by Mr. Jarboe, and had hurried off at once. It was very strange, in fact. All the day Mrs. Wallop had been trying to get into communication with the ranch gentleman, but without success. However, having received the message the Tumultys said nothing of it. Their air triumphant, they bustled into their things.

"See this!" cried Mr. Tams. His face was radiant. "Look!"

It was Mrs. Wallop to whom he spoke. Hardly had the Tumultys left, when Mrs. Wallop had been telephoned to. Her ear to the receiver, she gave a little scream. She evidently did not hear Mr. Tams.

"Trying to double-cross me! Don't you dast, Mr. Lubin, to say it!"

Mr. Lubin apparently did say it, for Mrs. Wallop gave another cry.

"Why, we're to be wed a week Thursday! It's the double-ring ceremony, supper to follow!"

Feverishly Mr. Tams waited for her to finish. Mrs. Wallop gave still another cry.

"What do you mean—money? I ain't giving it to him. It was to rebuild the house and all—the plumbing's bad!"

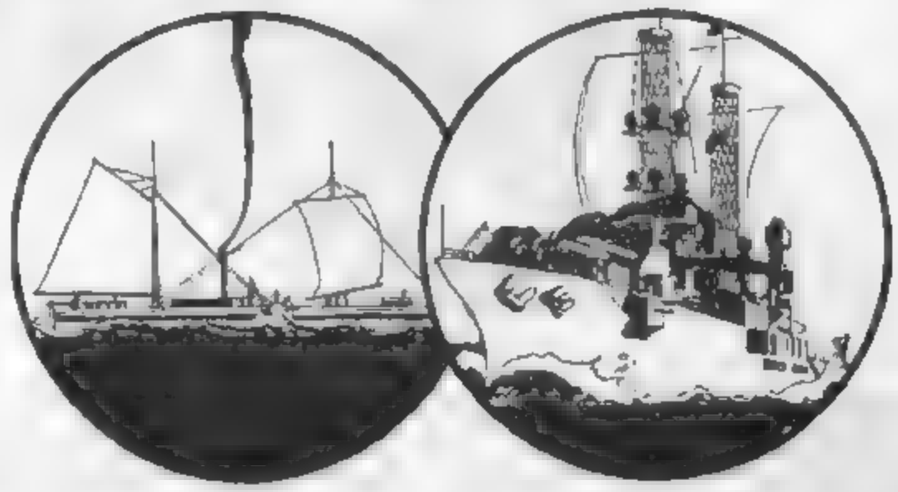
Mr. Tams still feverishly clutched the newspaper

"See what it says!" he exclaimed.

Mrs. Wallop did not seem to hear him. Hanging up the telephone, she darted into her bedroom. Almost instantly she darted out again, in the interim having donned hat and jacket. At full speed she passed out the front door, slamming the door behind her.

(Continued on Page 26)

From Clermont to California



The first steamboat, the *Clermont*, built by Robert Fulton, was running on the Hudson when the Hartford Fire Insurance Company of Hartford, Conn., began writing fire insurance in 1810. Throughout the entire history of steam navigation, from Fulton's crude experiment to the great super-dreadnaught *California* with its turbine-electric drive, there has been an equally remarkable insurance development toward the present comprehensive

INSURANCE *Service* OF THE TWO HARTFORDS

The Hartford Fire Insurance Company and the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company write practically every form of insurance except life insurance. For over a century Hartford losses have been fairly and promptly paid. The Hartford has helped rebuild New York, Boston, Charleston, Chicago, San Francisco and all American cities that have been visited by conflagrations. Are you fully insured? Look over the list below and check the forms of insurance which interest you. Ask your agent or broker to get you a Hartford policy, or write to us and we will tell you the name and address of an agent who can give you rates and particulars.

The Hartford Fire Insurance Co.
The Hartford Accident and Indemnity Co.

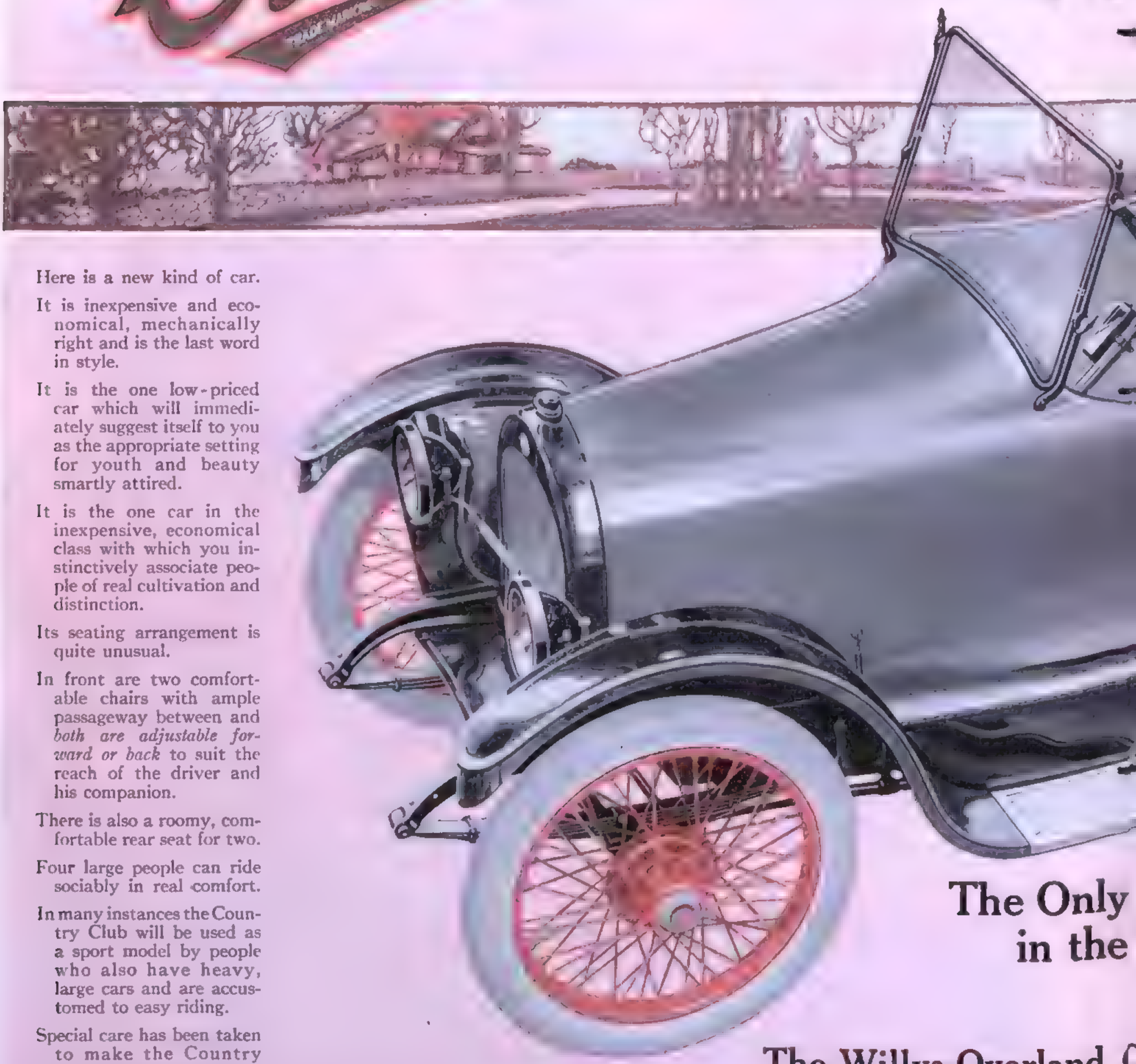
Hartford Fire Insurance Company, (Service Department P-12), 125 Trumbull Street, Hartford, Conn.

Gentlemen: Please send information on the kind of insurance checked and name of Hartford agent to the name and address written on margin of this coupon.

- ☐ Fire
- ☐ Rent
- ☐ Use and Occupancy
- ☐ Sprinkler Leakage
- ☐ Explosion
- ☐ Tornado
- ☐ Hail
- ☐ Automobile
- ☐ Motor Cycle
- ☐ Tractor
- ☐ Merchandise in Transit
- ☐ Mail Package
- ☐ Registered Mail
- ☐ Samples and Baggage
- ☐ Art Exhibitors
- ☐ Marine Insurance
- ☐ Accident and Health
- ☐ Burglary and Theft
- ☐ Plate Glass
- ☐ Workmen's Compensation
- ☐ Employer's Liability
- ☐ Elevator Liability
- ☐ Teams Liability
- ☐ Doctor's Liability
- ☐ Druggists' Liability
- ☐ Public Liability
- ☐ Landlord's Liability
- ☐ Fidelity and Surety Bonds
- ☐ Golfers'
- ☐ Live Stock
- ☐ Race and Show Horse
- ☐ Dairy Herds

Overland

Count 4 P



Here is a new kind of car.

It is inexpensive and economical, mechanically right and is the last word in style.

It is the one low-priced car which will immediately suggest itself to you as the appropriate setting for youth and beauty smartly attired.

It is the one car in the inexpensive, economical class with which you instinctively associate people of real cultivation and distinction.

Its seating arrangement is quite unusual.

In front are two comfortable chairs with ample passageway between and *both are adjustable forward or back* to suit the reach of the driver and his companion.

There is also a roomy, comfortable rear seat for two.

Four large people can ride sociably in real comfort.

In many instances the Country Club will be used as a sport model by people who also have heavy, large cars and are accustomed to easy riding.

Special care has been taken to make the Country Club a smooth, easy riding car.

The Only in the

The Willys-Overland

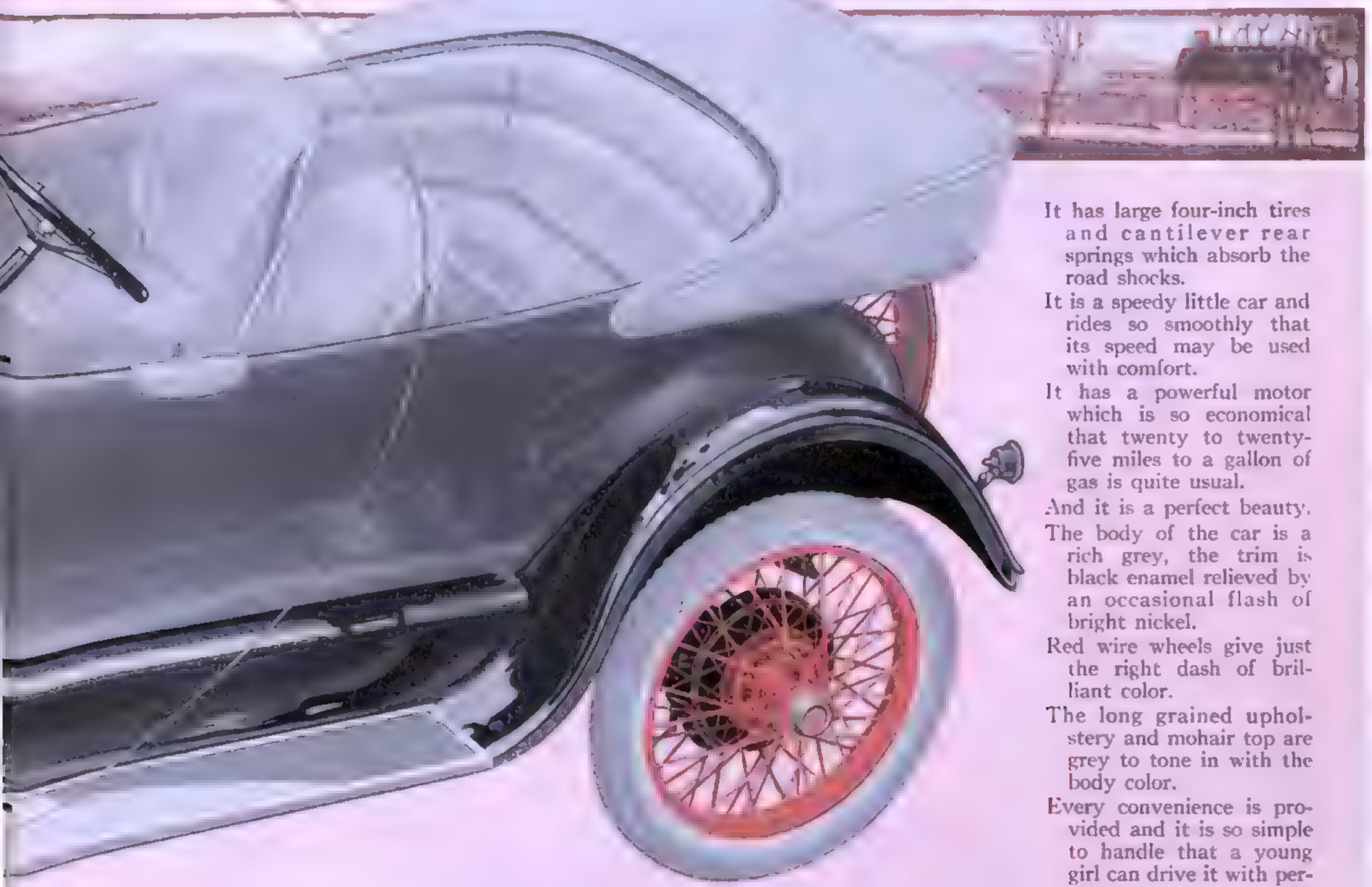
"Made in

ry-Club
assenger

$695

f.o.b. Toledo.

Including 5 wire wheels



It has large four-inch tires and cantilever rear springs which absorb the road shocks.

It is a speedy little car and rides so smoothly that its speed may be used with comfort.

It has a powerful motor which is so economical that twenty to twenty-five miles to a gallon of gas is quite usual.

And it is a perfect beauty.

The body of the car is a rich grey, the trim is black enamel relieved by an occasional flash of bright nickel.

Red wire wheels give just the right dash of brilliant color.

The long grained upholstery and mohair top are grey to tone in with the body color.

Every convenience is provided and it is so simple to handle that a young girl can drive it with perfect ease.

Like many another you have probably been hoping for someone to bring out just such a car.

It has found a waiting market ready to absorb thousands more than we can build in a long time to come.

See the Overland dealer and place your order at once if you want an early delivery.

Smart Sport Model
Small Car Class

ompany, Toledo, Ohio

U.S.A."

(Continued from Page 23)

"Hello," remarked Mr. Poulsen, abruptly awakening from his revery. "What's up with the madam?"

"Listen," said Mr. Tams; and he started in to read, when Mr. Poulsen, after a start, paling at the same time, abruptly interrupted him.

"Say, I ain't saying anything," said Mr. Poulsen, "but I don't like the way some people's actin' round here. What's up, anyway?"

Distracted now, Mr. Tams said he knew of nothing that was up. Again he sought to read to Mr. Poulsen what he'd found there in the paper, but Mr. Poulsen was in no mood to hear him.

"Say, you're trying to hold out on me, I'll bet!" said Poulsen. "That was Lubin on the wire, wasn't it?"

Leaping to his feet, his face convulsed, Mr. Poulsen seized his hat and, rushing to the door, darted out after Mrs. Wallop. Mr. Tams was still clutching the newspaper.

He was still clutching it, his face transfigured, when the door to the bedroom opened and Miss Minch abruptly entered. She was in a dressing gown, her hair down her back in a braid. Her face was covered with cold cream, and in her hand Miss Minch bore a rubber massage roller. She was obviously making ready for bed. Behind her was Susie Negley. Susie's eyes were red. Her face bore the stains of tears.

The massage roller in one hand, a tube of cold cream in the other, Miss Minch gave voice to a cry of agitation.

"What's happened?" she ejaculated.

Instantly Mr. Tams told her.

"It's all right!" he ejaculated. "Everything's all right!"

Miss Minch was seen to start. She gave a sudden gasp.

"All right? You mean the money? You've got it back?"

What money? What did she mean? His speech inarticulate, he indicated the newspaper. Miss Minch's face fell suddenly.

"Oh, that?" she said. "I've seen that!"

"But you don't understand!" cried Mr. Tams. "Everything's all right now. I've just been worried about nothing. If it wasn't all right it wouldn't be here in the paper!"

Then he read what he'd found printed there:

"Interesting to the social world, it being tendered to a prominent social leader, one of Coronado's most exclusive circle, a lawn fête will be given to-morrow in the spacious grounds of Sea Verge, the residence of J. Lester Tams, a number of prominent persons being present on the occasion, which Dame Gossip whispers is to be signaled by an announcement of importance to the social world. The guest of honor will be Mrs. H. Dunlop Gladdis. Mrs. Gladdis was *née* Isabelle Vogel, a daughter of the well-known Milwaukee Vogels. The family have a summer place at Waukesha. Mrs. T. Munson Harvey will pour."

"There!" said Mr. Tams.

XXV

THE lawn fête was at half past three. Four o'clock Mr. Tams would have preferred as the time, either At the Table or In the Drawing Room appointing that as the more *soignée* hour; but as the details had been arranged by Mrs. Gladdis and Mrs. Harvey the day of Mr. Lubin's yachting party, and Mr. Tams not having seen the ladies since, he had perforce let the hour rest.

The list of guests Mrs. Harvey had also arranged. At Mr. Tams' suggestion the invitations were to go out to her intimate circle, he confining his to the guests at the bungalow. To each of these, not satisfied with asking them in person, he had made it his duty to mail a separate card. The cards were nicely engraved, each card being headed by a coat of arms Mr. Tams had with a great deal of pains selected for himself out of a book of such designs. As there had been no time to engrave the crest, the cards being those in stock at the stationer's, he had solved this difficulty by having a rubber stamp made of the crest. With this he had stamped the invitations.

Mrs. Wallop's was similar to the others:

MR. J. LESTER TAMS, ESQRE.,
REQUESTS THE HONOR OF
MADAM L. PEARL WALLOP'S COMPANY
AT A LAWN FÊTE
TUESDAY AFTERNOON AT HALF AFTER 3
SEA VERGE. R. S. V. P.

Mrs. Wallop's name, it should be said, was Laura Pearl, but as Mr. Tams addressed her always as "Madam," the "L. Pearl" he considered more elegant than the other way. Attired in the sea-green poplin, that original *dernier cri*, she now was present, gravitating between the front lawn and the back kitchen door. Mrs. Harvey was to pour, but naturally Mrs. Wallop had assumed charge of the other refreshments. A rich custard was among them.

The others of Mr. Tams' house party, Mr. Poulsen and Mrs. Niblo excepted, also were at the fête. Early that day Mrs. Niblo had quit Coronado, departing hurriedly for San Francisco. Hardly had she gone, though, when a telegram arrived for her and, agitated, Mrs. Wallop had opened it. "Have invested money at Lubin's. You wrong me about the blonde." It was signed "Papa." As Mrs. Niblo, when pleasant, always addressed her husband as such, the wire obviously was from Niblo. As for Mr. Poulsen, though, there was nothing to explain his absence. Early in the morning he had hastily gone out. At one, as was his wont, he had appeared promptly at the midday meal; then, having gulped it down in silence, he had mopped his brow and again flitted. However, his absence was hardly noticed. Besides Mrs. Wallop, there also were present Miss Minch and the Tumultys.

The occasion being a lawn fête, Mr. Tams had laid out a croquet set, and he would have added a tennis net, too, had there been room for it. The Tumultys were using the croquet, having moved the chairs and two tables to do so; but Miss Minch was unoccupied. Her face was a mask. Every now and then, at some noise in the street, she was seen to start excitedly. Then, subsiding, she resumed her blank expression. She seemed to be waiting for something.

What she waited for, however, none could have told. But at moments when her gaze wandered to Mr. Tams, a new light came into Miss Minch's eyes. No longer hard, no more scornful and mocking, they seemed to soften compassionately. It seemed as if somehow pity and a deep regret over something welled in her heart.

Several times, rising abruptly, Miss Minch appeared about to speak to Mr. Tams; but always she resumed her seat without doing so. As the hour went on, she still sat watching, waiting.

In morning coat, striped trousers and silk hat, Mr. Tams moved about the lawn. A dozen times with his gloved hands he arranged and rearranged the chairs and tables. On every table were flowers, and these, too, he arranged and rearranged. Of one posy in particular he seemed especially solicitous. It was a cluster of orchids interwoven with sprays of maidenhair fern and orange blossoms. He touched it with dainty fingers, moving it into a shady spot whenever the rays of the sun threatened to wither it. And as he moved about he had a smile, a word, for everyone.

"Jolly little affair!" "Quite the party!" "Charming day for the fête!" "So good of you to come!"

These and other expressions fell from his lips every time he drew near to one of his guests. As the hour progressed, though, these brisk observations grew fewer and fewer. At half past three Mr. Tams was active and feverishly energetic; at four o'clock he was restrained. At a quarter past four dumbness settled on him. At half past four he was white and overwhelmed.

Bustling from the kitchen Mrs. Wallop abruptly spoke.

"Well," she exclaimed, "all I can say is we'd better eat. If we don't everything's going to be ruined!"

Mr. Tams awoke from his lethargy.

"But they haven't come yet!" he ejaculated. "We can't begin till they do."

It was as he said. Half past four, a full hour past the time, and Mrs. Gladdis and Mrs. Harvey had not yet appeared. Neither had the guests Mrs. Harvey had promised to invite.

"Well, All I Can Say is We'd Better Eat. If We Don't Everything's Going to Be Ruined!"

"They never will!" said Miss Minch.

Her voice rose, croaking, a note of dismal triumph in its tone. Mr. Tams turned to her in distress. His face pallid, he stared speechlessly at her; and with a gesture, a sudden movement of unaffected pity and distress, Miss Minch abruptly put out both her hands. Then in the corner of Miss Minch's eye a tear welled up.

"Oh, Mr. Tams!" she murmured. "Mr. Tams!"

He looked at her with trepidation.

"You mean they will never come?" he faltered.

Slowly Miss Minch nodded her head.

For a moment he stared at her, his face expressive of agony; and then his lips lined themselves together.

"I don't believe it!" said Mr. Tams.

He had hardly said it when a sudden commotion, accompanied by a rapidly rising series of noises, rose from the street outside. A string of motor cars whirled into view, at full speed roaring round the corner, and with a rattle of exhausts and whining of the brakes they came to a sudden stop at the sea wall opposite the bungalow. In them the occupants had risen. They were all yelling, all gesticulating. Mr. Tams, dumfounded, had just become aware of this, when in the midst of the confusion, and dashing through the thick of it, to his added wonder he saw Mr. Lubin!

Not for two days—not since the yachting party, in fact—had Mr. Tams laid eyes on him. However, Mr. Lubin evidently was now making haste to join the party at the lawn fête. What is more, a block in the rear, Mr. Poulsen was also to be observed. He, too, was running, his face convulsed. In one hand he held a newspaper, which he was wildly waving as he ran. This was as nothing, though. Mr. Tams saw something else.

A hundred yards or so down the roadway two horses burst into view. They were coming at a gallop. On the first of the two horses sat a slim figure in gray tweeds. Hat off, hair flying, and with a set face, agonized in its expression, the rider tugged wildly at the reins. Instantly Mr. Tams saw who it was. It was Gertie Pickell, daughter of the Burlingame Pickells!

Behind her, tearing along at the same breakneck speed, a young man on the other horse followed in pursuit. Bent forward in the saddle, his pale face set with a purpose, he had his hand outstretched, ready to snatch at the bridle of the girl's maddened brute once he raced alongside. Sir Lionel Vavasour! An elderly gentleman with white patriarchal whiskers had leaped from a motor and, his hands clasped, he was kneeling in the road.

"That's it, Draper!" yelled a voice. "Put the juice into it!"

Beyond, a man with a moving-picture camera sedulously turned the crank.

"Vell, here we are!" said Mr. Lubin genially.

Giving Mr. Tams a jovial dig in the ribs, he briskly addressed himself to Mrs. Wallop. His speech seemed hurried too. He was saying something about money—that if Mrs. Wallop had it on her he could double it overnight. Mr. Tams, however, did not heed the conversation. He had his eyes on the scene outside, and for the first time seemed to have seen the moving-picture machine.

Amid a roar of voices, that and wild gesticulation from the motor cars, Sir Lionel seized Miss Pickell by the waist, lifting her from the runaway thoroughbred, the gentleman in the motor yelling as he did so:

"That's the cheese! That a boy! We got tn' ack this time!"

The act? Agape Mr. Tams heard him. Behind him Mr. Lubin was still energetically talking to Mrs. Wallop. The lady was arguing back. Discouraged evidently, Mr. Lubin flung himself upon the Tumultys. The result was the same. Mr. Lubin having proposed to them what he'd just proposed to Mrs. Wallop, and the Tumultys having declined the offer, Mr. Lubin said something else. At once Mrs. Tumulty joined her voice to Mrs. Wallop's. There was, in fact, a great deal of confusion both indoors and out.

Just then Mr. Poulsen, too, joined in.

Outside, Sir Lionel and Miss Pickell having accomplished their duty, the motors were moving away. Inside, the voices of Mrs. Wallop and Mrs. Tumulty rose louder.

"Jarboe gone!" Mrs. Wallop was shrieking.

"Him a swindler!" Mrs. Tumulty shrilled.

Dashing through the gate Mr. Poulsen rushed into the yard. As he came, Mr. Lubin, with an agility surprising in one of his rotund build, abruptly climbed the back fence. In vain Mr. Poulsen sought to pursue him. Miss Minch had him by the coat tails.

"What's happened?" she demanded, by now a classic phrase of hers.

Mr. Poulsen sought to wrench himself free.

"Swindler! Thief! Con man!" he was shouting. But as Miss Minch clutched him he desisted.

"Read that!" he cried.

Thrusting the newspaper he carried into Miss Minch's hands he broke from her grasp and, flinging himself over the fence, sped in pursuit of the now rapidly disappearing Mr. Lubin.

Miss Minch read, and then she turned to Mr. Tams. At this moment, though, Mr. Tams was in no condition to undergo another shock. A smart open motor, a landaulet, was slowly rolling past. In the motor were Mrs. Harvey and Mrs. Gladdis. The polo player's lady was gazing interestedly toward the bungalow and the lawn beside it, laughing as she did so. Mrs. Gladdis, though, was looking straight ahead.

(Concluded on Page 30)

MAXWELL TESTING LEAVES NO ROOM FOR DOUBT

EVERY Maxwell Car that leaves our factories is a tried and known unit. We definitely determine, as far as is physically possible, just what every Maxwell Car will do in the hands of its owner. Each Car must pass the dynamometer test, an unfailing guarantee of efficiency (see illustration at top).

Every part of the engine and then the assembled engine, the chassis, the wheels, the transmission, the starter, the steering gear, the brakes and finally the finished Maxwell Car—all of these are examined and tested many times and in many different ways.

So that when you buy a Maxwell you know what to expect of it. It has passed our tests which are more severe than any tests you will ever put it to. You have complete confidence in it because it has already fulfilled our exacting requirements.

We cannot afford to take chances. We do not assume anything. We find out and *know*.

This manufacturing policy, faithfully pursued, has earned for the Maxwell an invaluable reputation for dependability, for exceeding serviceability.

Moreover, this manufacturing policy is an important contributing cause to the actual fact that the Maxwell is "*The World's Greatest Motor Car Value.*"

MAXWELL ENCLOSED CARS: Sedan, $985; Town Car, $915; Cabriolet, $865.
All models completely equipped, including electric starter and lights.
IN CANADA: Touring Car, $850; Roadster, $830, f. o. b. Windsor, Ontario.

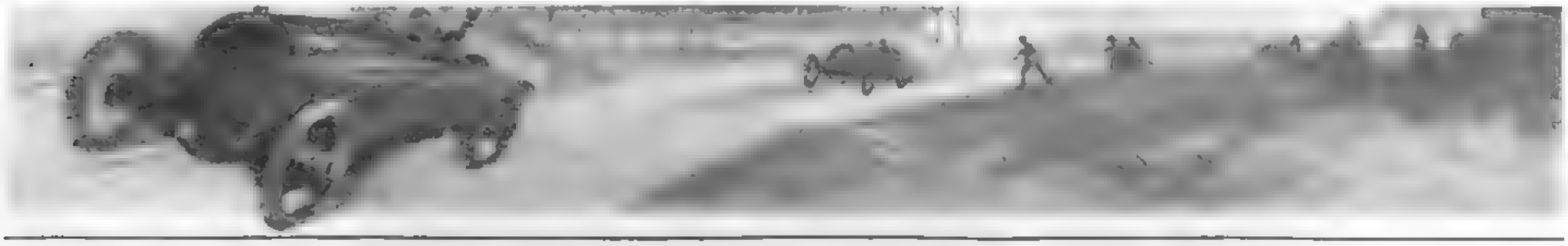
Touring Car

$595
F.O.B DETROIT

Roadster

$580
F.O.B DETROIT

Maxwell Motor Company, Inc. Detroit, Mich.



"They Have Performed

I SUPPOSE I am in competition now with Jim Henry, the Big Leaguers and other lay members of the advertising literati; which is neither here nor there.

The point is, out of an experience reasonably broad, I want to speak regarding an automobile tire—a wonderful automobile tire.

I know this tire. I know other tires. I've put about all of them, I guess, over as varied and strenuous a bunch of hurdles as the tracks and road courses of this country can offer. I've seen them whimper and quit, flare up and puff out under the lash of speed like a lamp in the wind—and I've seen them stand up and score. This tire I'm telling of—the Goodyear Cord Tire—stands up and scores.

It's the heartiest, spunkiest, fightin'est tire under a beating I ever rode.

I remember the morning they first brought a batch of them to Indianapolis for trial—a matter of months ago. The tires had made good on the road, they said, and deserved a place in racing. So we took them out to the Speedway and smoked them down the straightaways and around the turns.

The Indianapolis Speedway is a brick course with a concrete wash. The concrete shell is paper-thin, and for the most part has been dusted away, leaving the bricks exposed. The course is an ideal one for testing tires—speed over the surface gnaws, burns and frictions rubber like an emery wheel. The tire that stands its grief has something in it besides wind.

Well, that morning we introduced Goodyear Cords into fast company. We slithered turns, zigzagged stretches and skidded the end-banks on them. We shredded treads and ruptured beads and strained lugs till we couldn't rest. And we found out some things.

We found out, for one thing, that the stock Goodyear Cord tread was too thick for racing purposes. High speed just naturally scalps a tire carcass of a heavy tread. But we found out another thing that was more important. The stock Goodyear Cord Tire carcass had everything that a racing tire should have. Even when we stripped it stark of tread, it held. It held—stood up—endured—stuck on the job!

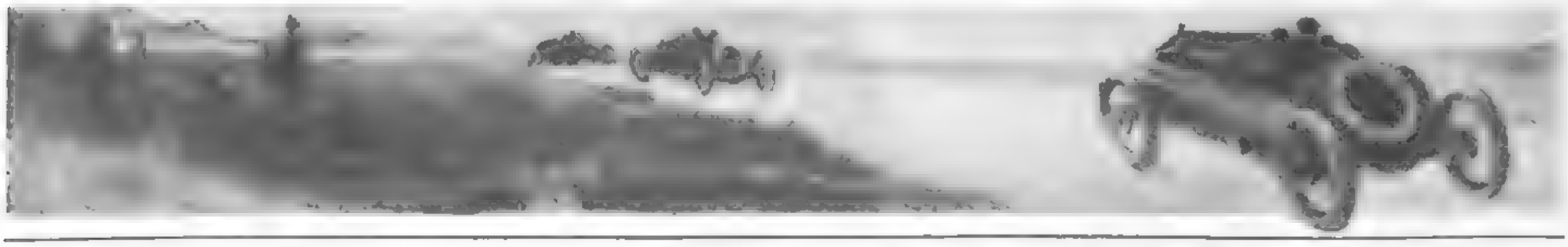
In all my speedway experience with Goodyear Cords since, on either brick or board courses, I've found this carcass ready to finish if I was.

I've had them ripped to pieces by track splinters, and I've stripped treads in the hotter clashes—but I never had one flunk out on me when I needed it. This sort of stuff in a tire means something to a racing driver. Where a win is a matter of seconds, first position may hang on whether you limp to the pit or roll up.

I always roll up, on Goodyear Cords.

It means something besides seconds saved in the replacements, too. Confidence is as important as gasoline when the pace gets keen.

When you're boring down the course at a hundred, a hundred-and-five, or better—we make that regularly nowadays, on the ovals—with a hoodful of cylinders spitting flame and sparkling fury a foot away on either side; when



"Wonders for Me"

you're at the two-hundredth mile, say—and the rapid-fire riffle of an uneven course is swollen by speed and strain into a thumping torment; when the whip of the wind in your face has numbed it to ice, and the labor of your mount has become a personal effort, and the whole blare and nightmare of it all sinks to an ache in your wrists that climbs your arms and centers in a bedeviling knot at the back of your neck—then it's good, unbelievably *good,* to know there's something under you that you can step on safely, crowd to the last throttle-nick if you have to, bank on, up to and past the sweep of the checkered flag!

There may be other tires as strong as Goodyear Cords. I doubt it—but there may be. Strength, however, isn't the whole answer in racing. Some tires are strong enough, but lazy. A lazy tire on a speed car works just the same as an anchor on a ship. It drags.

The thing about Goodyear Cords is that they are not only strong, but active—they have life, spring, speed. Every time a piston shoots a power-punch down through the line of gears, these tires deliver it to the tracks in its original package. They don't merely apply power; they kick it out. Maybe they add something to it in the way of intensity in the process—I don't know. But I do know they come clean with the last ounce of impulse the axle hands over—counting out, of course, the five per cent traction slippage suffered by all tires in track work.

Naturally, I don't drive a hundred, a hundred-and-five, or better—all of the time. The traffic policemen have their own ideas in the matter of sane speeds, as have I.

But I do drive Goodyear Cords all of the time. Off-stage, I get about in a Sedan; it's heavy, decently slow and industrious—and it wears Goodyear Cords. I find them cheaper, the season through, than other tires. And I find them better in point of appearance, long life, security and fuel-saving.

* * *

I've called them wonderful tires—they've performed wonders for me. Outside of the blue Peugeot, and whatever skill I may have used, they've done more for me in winning the American Speedway Championship for 1916 than any other one thing. They're championship breed, from bead to bead. I'm glad to say this word about them.

"Johnny" Aitken
American Speedway Champion, 1916

(Signed)
John D. Aitken

* * *

Some of the racing achievements of Goodyear Cord Tires in the past few months are as follows: First Place in the Kansas City 100-mile race; First, Third, Fourth and Fifth Places in the Tacoma 300-mile race; First Place in the Cincinnati 300-mile Sweepstakes; First and Second Places in the Record-Breaking Astor Cup 250-mile race at Sheepshead Bay; Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Places in the 230-mile Grand American race on the Chicago Speedway; First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Places in the Harkness Trophy Race at Sheepshead Bay; First, Second and Third Places in the International Grand Prize Race at Santa Monica, Cal.

CORD TIRES

(Concluded from Page 26)

Facing her sat Mr. Meiggs, the automobile gentleman! But Miss Minch gave them only a passing look. She put her hand on Mr. Tams' arm and gently led him aside.

"Read this," she directed softly.

The newspaper was the evening newspaper. The item was succinct:

FRISCO BUCKETSHOP RAIDED

LUBIN'S IN MONTGOMERY STREET PULLED BY POST-OFFICE INSPECTORS

COMPLAINT MADE IN SAN DIEGO

ALL CASH AND CHECKS SEIZED, THE SUCKER LIST INCLUDING NAMES OF SOCIAL LEADERS WELL KNOWN IN SWELL CORONADO CIRCLES

Mr. Tams hardly heeded it. A deep breath escaped him.

"Just a dream, wasn't it?" he murmured. "Sir Lionel was a dream; Miss Pickell, too; and so were those women, the swells and the friends I thought I'd made!"

"Yes, nothing but a dream," Miss Minch returned.

"Well," said Mr. Tams, "I guess that finishes it. If that's the way gentlemen and ladies act—if they do cruel things like that—I guess I don't want to be a gentleman. I don't guess I've ever been one or ever will be."

Miss Minch had her doubts, too, though she didn't say so.

"Listen, Mr. Tams; I did all I could to save you. I tried to save you from coming here. I tried to save you from that woman, that fortune hunter, and I tried to save you from Lubin too. It was I that complained to the post-office people. It was I that got him raided. I tried to do it in time to save your money for you. The money's gone, though. The newspapers don't know it yet, but yesterday Belcher ran off with the roll. That's why they raided the place to-day. All Lubin has is what he got from Poulsen. I tried to save you, Mr. Tams!"

"You did all this for me?" faltered Mr. Tams.

Looking up at him Miss Minch laid her hand on his shoulder.

"What are you going to do?" she asked.

Mr. Tams smiled at her wanly. Near at hand Mrs. Wallop and Mrs. Tumulty stood, their arms round each other, rocking together in their woe. Mr. Belcher, it seemed, was not the only one who'd absconded. Mr. Jarboe, too, was gone. Having obtained Mrs. Wallop's money under promise of marriage, he had next sold the ranch to the Tumultys. It now appeared he had never owned that ranch. "Well?" inquired Miss Minch of Mr. Tams.

Again Mr. Tams smiled wanly.

"There is nothing to do," he said. "I am ruined, am I not? I must go back again to the Beehive."

"Well, you won't!" snapped Miss Minch.

Mr. Tams stared in astonishment.

"Won't? You mean they have someone else in my place?"

"Huh, if they have," snapped Miss Minch, "they can keep him!" Then her eyes fell. "I didn't tell you, I was saving it for a surprise, but this morning Joe Babbett came sneaking back; and before he could go and do anything fool, I snaked him and Susie over to the nearest minister's!"

"Charm——" exclaimed Mr. Tams, but did not finish it. Instead he slapped himself on the thigh exultantly. "That's the stuff! Bully for him!" said Mr. Tams. Then he looked back at Miss Minch again. "Yes, but what's that got to do with me?"

"Oh, Jake!" said Miss Minch, and she flushed to the roots of her hair: "there's a little house up-country—it's got a porch and vines all over it! If Mrs. Wallop was with me she could be chaperon, and you could come and see me. Yes, and I'd like to say something else. I didn't lose the money you made for me, Jake! I've got it yet, all but the three hundred I used as a bait for Lubin. It's nearly eleven thousand, Jake!"

Mr. Tams flushed scarlet to the ears.

"Oh, hang the money, Jenny! You bet I'll come to see you!"

(THE END)

PUTTING ON PERCIVAL

(Continued from Page 7)

"Away in a certain Czardom, across three times nine kingdoms, beyond high mountain chains, there once lived a merchant," Freda would chant. "When Wassilissa was eight years old her mother died and left her a wonderful wooden doll. At night, when the little girl was sick with sorrow for her dear lost mother, she would take this doll, feed it, and then—what dost thou think?—the eyes of the doll would commence to grow like sparks of fire, and it would start talking to its little mistress. 'Don't cry, little Wassilissa,' would say this wonderful doll. 'Sorrow is worse at night. Lie down, shut thine eyes, and go to sleep.'"

"But what would make the little girl cry, Freda?" would ask her auditor.

"Why? Why, because her dear mother was dead."

Percival's eyes invariably puzzled over this explanation. His mother had gone away from him—just lots of times—and it did not make him cry. Dropping this point then, as something inscrutable, he would take up another aspect of the story:

"Get me doll that will talk, Freda, and wif eyes that glow like fire."

"Ah, precious little one, I can't get you a doll like that."

"Why not?"

"Because such a doll is not to be bought."

At this Percival would always break into a howl of discomfiture. There were treasures that stalked meanly in books, treasures that money could not buy; and already the little son of millions felt the injustice of such reservations.

"Tell about her going to the wicked witch," he would insist after his brief abandonment to disappointment.

To be sure, he knew each paragraph that was coming; but there was one thing of which he could never get enough: It was the marvelous liberating drip of these oft-repeated syllables on the hard surface of everyday life.

Mrs. Van Hook's New Interest

"Well," resumed Freda, "by and by the little girl's father married again and the stepmother was very cruel to Wassilissa. One day, in order to get rid of her forever, she sent her out to get fire from the wicked witch Baba-Yaga. Once outside the house, she sat down and cried. But again the little wooden doll comforted her. 'Do not fear, Wassilissa,' said it, with its glowing eyes. 'While I am with thee no harm can come.' Then the little girl put her doll back into her pocket and started out into the dark, wild forest."

"Alone?" always questioned Percival.

"Alone."

"But where was her nurse?"

"Ah, precious little one, this poor child had no nurse."

"But everybody has a nurse," he insisted.

Of what, anyway, could Freda be thinking? Didn't she know as well as he that all those other children met at the Seventy-second Street entrance of Central Park, and at Bailey's Beach, in Newport, had their nurses—just as he? And his wondering, upward look shot straight into a smile of Freda's dear, funny, kind eyes. This particular smile, however, was not tumbling and jolly. It was all wistful tenderness for the poor little boy who could not imagine hardship.

As has already been mentioned, Percival enjoyed each morning at nine the faint, elusive fumes of maternal affection. Once in the big strange room on the second floor, Percival sat down with his nurse and his two sisters and enjoyed the play. And what a fascinating performance it was! Here in the chair before a dressing table sat a lady in a soft pink flap of silk. Ministering figures hovered about this lady. Celeste, the French maid, laid out fresh clothes for the day and chattered French. Miss Dillingham, the social secretary, was usually there with a tremendous heap of letters. Best of all, a froglike woman in white did remarkable things to the lady's face. Covering it with cold cream, she stroked it and smoothed it and smacked it with a sharp flurry of finger tips.

The lady in the soft pink flap of silk was his mother! And it was this that little Wassilissa had cried so to lose!

On one particular morning, when Percival was three years old, the morning visit to his occasional parent was disturbed by the sense of something having got into the room before he did. Standing there on the threshold of the spacious bedroom, with his hand held tight in that of Freda, he was conscious at once of the strange element.

"Yes, Jessica," his mother was saying to Miss Finch as the froglike woman shuttled through her brown locks with the tongs, "I have decided to send the girls to school."

"*L'école, c'est bien, maman,*" spoke up the little brown girl from the corner.

"Yes," said the mother thoughtfully; "I think it will be the very best thing. I don't believe in this tower of ivory we have been building for the children, Jessica. They must"—and Mrs. Van Hook revived herself by a reference to the open book on the dressing table before her—"have the stimulus of neighboring minds of their own age, working out the same problems they do. I want the girls to be democratic; to—well, the fact of the matter is, I want them to rough it."

Miss Finch looked dolefully at the source of these glib utterances. It was The Development of the Child. This book was the strange element that had got into the room before Percival, and Miss Finch understood only too well what it meant. Mrs. Van Hook had taken up her children as an intellectual interest!

"What school shall we go to?" asked the little golden-brown girl, trembling like a stamen, set there in her stiff calyx of gingham frock.

"I do hope it will be the Wheeler," said Hildegarde; "Elise Durkin says it's lots of fun."

Through her manipulated locks Mrs. Van Hook looked at her younger daughter. From the two governesses and Miss Finch had come discouraging reports of this child. She had no docile suppleness of mind, like her older sister. She did not care for study at all. Mrs. Van Hook saw a problem in Hildegarde and warmed to her at once.

Then, all of a sudden, she became conscious of her son.

She beckoned to him and he reluctantly unlocked his little hand from that of Freda. It was exactly like being called from the front row, where one had been cozily enjoying the play with a treasured companion, to jump over the footlights and talk to the leading lady.

Mrs. Van Hook looked at the compact little figure and the shy, pink little face under its cloud of brown hair; and the look, more intent than any she had ever given him, might have been traced directly to that grassy plot in The Development of the Child entitled First Years of the Child's Life.

"Are you happy, Percival?" asked the leading lady at last.

"Yes, mother; thank you," he replied politely. Then with an eloquent backward look at the figure in the doorway: "I have Freda."

"And you like her?"

"She plays with me; and"—in a burst of confidence—"she tells me fairy stories."

"That's good." Then, turning to Miss Finch: "I want him to learn to play, Jessica. Robert Louis Stevenson, you know, says that is what is the matter with so many children nowadays—they haven't any imagination. Tell me, Percival"—returning to the small subject at her knee—"do you speak German with Freda?"

"Freda talks German to him most of the time," interpolated Miss Finch.

"Ah, but how about his French? It's time he was learning that, you know."

"I don't like French," spoke up Percival. "It jags."

Mrs. Van Hook glowed.

"Why, Jessica," cried she, "he has a picturesque mind—Percival. I suppose he means that French is sharp and wiry. Well, you must have it, at any rate, dear. Now is the time for him to be learning languages. You'll have to see, Jessica, that he spends a certain amount of time each day with Mademoiselle Cauchois."

Percival did not protest then and there. He knew too well the reserve demanded by the other side of the footlights. But once outside with Freda, he broke into a storm of tears. And thereafter his one hour a day spent with the nervous, unplayful Mademoiselle Cauchois, away from the beloved Freda, revealed to him the coming adversities of his lot.

As for his sisters, they were now "roughing it" at the Wheeler School. The program of hardships consisted in being driven, with one of their governesses, in their own closed car over the handsome blocks between the Van Hook mansion and the famous school; in being restored to their home at half past one by the same amiable agencies; and in sitting for four and a half hours in rooms provided with seats and desks adjustable to the size of the occupants; with charming teachers, who vitalized the old dusty studies; and with an outdoor gymnasium. In spite, however, of a tuition ranging from three hundred and fifty to four hundred dollars; in spite of the long queue of imported cars which drew up each morning with its pupils; this excellent school for girls did provide democratic facilities.

"What do you think, Miss Finch!" announced Marian at the six o'clock dinner served in the children's dining room. "There's a girl in my class who has no automobile, and her mother always calls for her! Isn't that funny?"

"Strange!" corrected Miss Finch from the head of the table. "And please do not forget that we are speaking this week in French, Marian."

"Her name is Fredericka Brownell," continued the little brown girl, meekly shifting to the foreign tongue; "and they're awfully odd people. Her father draws pictures for the magazines."

"They are no doubt very charming people," said Miss Finch conscientiously. Then, turning to Hildegarde, a little dot of white lawn, slurred by the splendid bow of Tompkins' green back: "My dear child, your left hand in your lap, please. You are becoming very careless."

But though to Marian Miss Finch might preserve a well-bred composure in the face of grave revelations concerning a little girl who walked to school and whose mother called for her, she spoke more candidly to Marian's mother.

Impossible Democracy

"Dorcas," said she the following morning, catching Mrs. Van Hook in the usual snare of cold cream and curling tongs, "I'm afraid you're going to have trouble with your school."

"Why?" asked the consulting parent, innocently looking up, with her starched upward curve of mouth.

"Oh, well—they seem to be thrown in with all kinds of children. Marian spoke yesterday of a little Brownell girl—the daughter of some kind of a person—an artist, I think."

"But that's what I want," retorted Mrs. Van Hook. "I want my children to be democratic. Why, there are Lebensteins and Grundheimers in the school; and it's such a splendid thing, Jessica! Don't you see? The Semitic mind is so active and acquisitive—all educators say it gives impetus to a class."

Miss Finch sniffed at this type of modern convenience. What in the world could be the matter with Dorcas Van Hook, anyway? To be a phalarope parent, to flit off and leave your young with others, was an inevitable and perhaps not unfortunate consequence of being born in certain ranks of life. But what if, from her distant bough, the mother took up her children as a fad, twittered to other long-range parents about the development of the young mind, and returned to her nest with all sorts of foolish laboratory theories? Why couldn't she have been content with the latest import of esoteric religion?

In a desperate flurry of courage the English parent-by-proxy looked at the other parent.

"Dorcas," said she sternly, "do you think Marian will be likely to meet Fredericka Brownell in later years?"

"I don't know. What has that to do with it?"

"There you are!" cried Miss Finch triumphantly. And for once she was not abstracted; for once she buttoned down tightly every flap of the conversation. "You know, Dorcas, and so do I, that she won't. Your way of living is too fixed—it pens you up everlastingly with the few people who can afford to live as expensively as you do. You can't be democratic—you can only dabble a little in democracy. And as for Marian

being democratic merely because she has a little school acquaintance with poorer girls—why, that's just as silly as a millionaire's son putting on blue overalls and thinking he is one of the workmen!"

Mrs. Van Hook retreated weakly before the lapping flames of this eloquence; and her attitude was clearly: "Mercy! Mercy! until I read what somebody has said on this subject." In one respect the excellent Wheeler School did offer democratic hardships. It prided itself on making pupils work; and woe to the child playing hookey with its parents in Europe or at the horse races! Each one of those lost lessons had to be made up in the school.

Already Hildegarde was feeling the rigors of this system. Returning to the nursery one day at four o'clock, under the shelter of the inevitable Fraulein Fertig, the nine-year-old child fairly threw her coat and hat at the luckless German governess.

"Whatever has kept you, Hildegarde?" asked Marian, looking up from her French verbs.

"Making up arithmetic!" cried Hildegarde fiercely. "Oh, how I hate it! And you did all those problems wrong for me, fräulein—every one! My teacher said they were done with a German accent and that you didn't put in the lines at the right places. What's the good of having a governess, anyway, who can't do your lessons for you?" she flared at the meek fräulein.

"*Mademoiselle Eeldegarde,*" snapped Mademoiselle Cauchois, the disciplinarian of the nursery, "*taisez-vous!*"

"Well," retorted Hildegarde defiantly, "it's true! I heard Miss Pratt, the geography teacher, saying to Miss Snow that the school would get along very well if its pupils hadn't governesses. She said they just hindered ——"

"Your laziness is what does that, Mademoiselle Hildegarde. And I have just heard something you will not like—Miss Finch is going to make you pay for all the lessons you have to make up out of your own allowance. There!" and the spectacled eyes of mademoiselle fairly clicked at the refractory pupil.

The little girl flopped down dejectedly at the white table with its painted rosebuds. She received only thirty-five dollars a month for spending money, and she had other uses for that. There, for instance, was a saddle which she coveted for her new hunter, Light o' the Dawn.

"Never mind," spoke up Marian; "you ought to see Becky Durkin these days! She has to stay in every afternoon since she got back from the Bryn Mawr Horse Show."

Off to the Country

Hildegarde brightened—not at the companionship in woe, but at the implied reason for Becky's enslavement.

"Did she get a blue ribbon?" asked she, lifting the yellow head from the folded gingham arms on the table.

"Oh, of course!" replied Marian languidly.

"That Emmy Lou of hers is a beauty," remarked Hildegarde. "I saw her get a sweat-out a little while ago. Oh, dear, I wish we could have gone to Bryn Mawr last week! Whatever can be the matter with mother, anyway? She didn't used to be like this. Why, last year we went every place with the horses—every single place! Oh, dear!"

The long wail embraced it all—the discipline of study and the deprivation of the tanbark; and now from the open doorway came a final emphasis of her fettered state.

"*Bitte,* Fräulein Hildegarde!" spoke Fräulein Fertig. "Your practice hour."

That spring the Van Hook family did not remove to the stately home on the Hudson. This was because Mrs. Van Hook had decided to have a decorator remodel the children's rooms on this estate. So, while she and Mr. Van Hook winged their way to Europe, the three children, with their respective nurses and maids, were taken to their grandmother, Mrs. Bellwether Dulcimer. Only Miss Finch remained at Oaktops to supervise the installment of an environment that should "best stimulate the child's imagination and love of beauty."

Since the day when Mrs. Dulcimer had shooed his crested and ermine-covered perambulator from the august portal of the front door, Percival had seen his grandmother very few times. Now and then—at birthday parties and at the Christmas celebration always held at Oaktops—he had been privileged to peck at that frosty red cheek. In the beginning of this visit Mrs. Bellwether Dulcimer did not seem inclined to strengthen the acquaintance.

When Percival and his two sisters, and their three nurses, and their innumerable pieces of baggage—two trunks to a child—rolled up the driveway to the colonial doorway of the Dulcimer country home, the grandmother was not there to receive them. She had gone out to her stables. This, however, was not important; for receptions at The Brambles went off automatically. Walking in between the two scarlet-coated footmen, the party was met by Grimes, the butler. This functionary led them solemnly up to the third floor and committed them to their rooms.

On the afternoon of the Saturday following their arrival Freda was playing with Percival out on the front piazza. Freda did not know that a house party was expected, and she knew still less that Mrs. Bellwether Dulcimer sharpened up the old adage, "Children must be seen and not heard," to "Children must be neither seen nor heard!" Hence the ensuing incident.

Mrs. Dulcimer Meets Her Match

At four o'clock the house party rolled up in the various motors assigned to meet them. Leading the van was Mrs. Hawkcote Grundleton Gabit, of Boston, who, through some strange whimsey, stopped to speak to the little boy with big blue eyes and fat pink legs.

"And is this little boy Percival Dulcimer Van Hook?" said she, holding out her hand. "How are you, my dear?"

The boy gave one look at the hooked nose and the big black eyes, made almost ferocious by their make-up, and, with a scream of terror, clung to his nurse's hand.

"It's Baba-Yaga!" cried he. "It's the wicked witch, come to get me!"

A sultry silence fell upon the advancing house party, all of whom had paused with Mrs. Gabit.

"Oh!" said Mrs. Gabit freezingly. "What a horrid child!"

Freda picked up the screaming child in her arms.

"Oh, madam," said she protestingly, "I assure you he is not! He is the sweetest and the best child."

The grandmother, however, was not blinded by any such loyalty. With perfect composure, from her place in the doorway, she had heard her grandchild dismissed as "Horrid!" The only thing which embarrassed her was that any such violation of good form as a child on the piazza should ever have happened in her house.

"Freda," she commanded fiercely, "I want you to keep him out of the way. Don't let me see you in the rose walk or in the Italian garden, or any place else where my guests are. Take him away off in one of the side paths."

Then, when her guests were all assembled for tea in the great hall, she defined her position as to the coming generation.

"I believe in sending them off to school some place," said she, addressing herself to the lacerated Mrs. Gabit. "They ought to be able to get Percival in now in about three years. I remember I sent Dick away when he was seven. And not a bit too soon! Of course he was homesick—used to cry himself to sleep every night with an old canton-flannel rabbit! Wasn't it too funny?" And throwing her head back, she laughed again over this oft-repeated story.

During the following weeks the Van Hook children were thoughtfully concealed. Members of the various house parties which assembled under the Dulcimer roof were unaware that there was a child in the house. And the children themselves knew no more of the dancing and the flirting, the card playing and the frivolity, which some day was to claim them, than does the creature in its cocoon learn of the bright, flitting-butterfly existence for which it is preparing. Their meals were served by one of the footmen; they went to and from the house by means of side doors; and though the two little girls, freed now for a few months from their governesses, rode horseback or motored, Percival and his attendant were generally buried by the charitable foliage of the great estate.

Every morning at nine the small boy and his friend started forth with their treasures. Trains of cars, express wagons and livestock were packed under Freda's arm, and at her heels the little pink-legged boy trundled his favorite toy automobile. Following an unfrequented path, they generally came to a shy, wild spot in the forest, far removed from any knickered gentleman or inquisitive lady of the house parties. Here, beside a great hollow treetrunk, Percival sat down.

"Now," said he, always with a little sigh of pleasure, "what shall we play?"

Little Mike Sullivan, born down on Avenue A, could have answered this question very well. He—Mike Sullivan—would have attached a cigar box to a string and been pleased with the bumping of this improvised toy over the city streets. But Percival's training had robbed him of any such resourcefulness; and just as Freda drew his bath, laid out his clothes and dressed him, she laid out all his plays before him. He himself waited until he should be entertained.

One morning, as Freda was drawing his play for him, they were surprised by a step; and, looking up, Percival beheld Mrs. Dulcimer. All her life she had been fond of taking long walks by herself, and to-day her springy step told of well-disciplined muscles. Giving a sharp look at the two, the venerable society leader sat down on a fallen treetrunk and lighted a cigarette.

"Well," said she quite kindly; "what are you two doing?"

Percival made no reply. He merely gave a long investigating look at the well-corseted figure and the accomplished garlands of smoke.

"Are you a grandmother?" he asked finally.

"Of course I am!" replied Mrs. Dulcimer.

"Then, why aren't you like the grandmothers Freda tells about?"

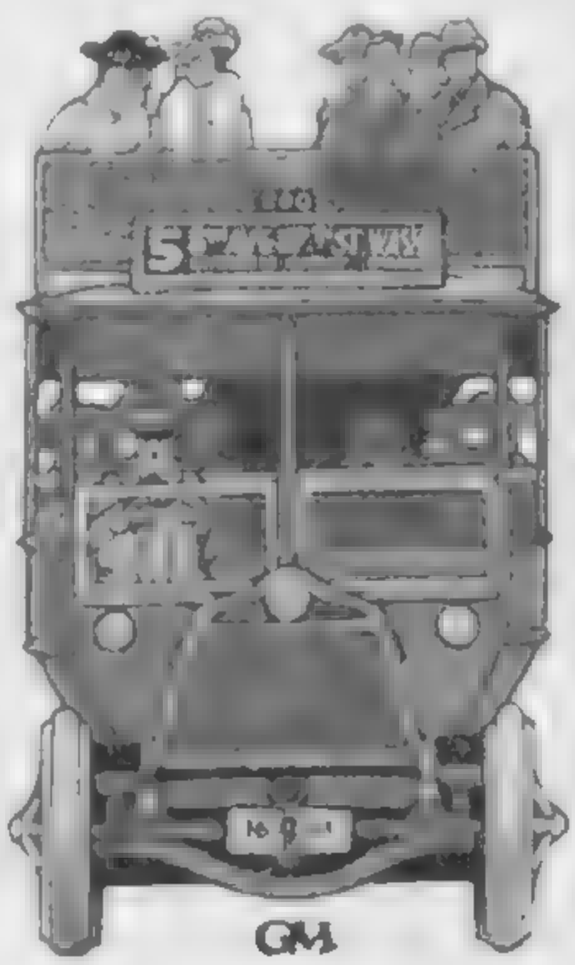
"Why, you pert youngster! What are they like?"

The Defective Grandparent

It was the cindery manner, the fierce eye, which had always petrified Mrs. Dulcimer's own children; but Percival felt no fear. He was too absorbed in that everlasting disparity between the characters in books and the characters in real life.

"They're nice, and—and wrinkled," explained he, meeting bravely the forbidding eyes; "and they love their little grandchildren and give them cookies from a bag."

The defective grandparent eyed the little boy through her cigarette smoke. She was always won by people who stood up to her, and Percival's bravery appealed to her. In addition she found his remarks amusing. Indeed, now in the twilight of life, she felt a pang for wasted opportunities. Was it possible that she, who always had been in the crow's nest to spy new sails of amusement, had overlooked one patent source of interest? Did bothering with your children pay, after all?



From this time forth Mrs. Bellwether Dulcimer seemed to have a real liking for Percival, and would often ask Freda to bring him to her room or for a drive. Right here, however, her grandmotherly sentiment stopped short. For the two little girls she cherished an almost Herodian bitterness.

The following winter Percival was four years old and the jug of education commenced to pour its unwelcome contents upon his head. Throughout the winter he was taught for two hours each day by the two governesses. The next summer he was taught to ride a pony and to swim. When he was five he was sent to dancing school, and by the time his sixth birthday had arrived Percival was getting ready to master a number of studies that he could not possibly use in his future life.

It was during his sixth year that the tragedy took place which left him an uncompanioned, loveless little figure, whirling madly about in the cage of correct living prepared by his fifty million dollars.

It all happened in this way: Waking one morning at six he went into the next room—the room in which for the past four years he had been accustomed to meeting the dear, funny, slanting eyes of his German nurse. This morning, however —— Why, what was this lying there on the bed? It was a large bottle of green pasteboard, decked with silver labels and with a seal; and from the end of the bottle stuck out two small slippers—silver, to correspond with the tin-foil neck.

Freda in Disgrace

Paralyzed with fright, the small boy yet drew nearer; and at that moment a thought pierced his brain. Could this be Freda—his Freda? Yes, yes; that was it, and she had invented a new game for him. But why, then, didn't she speak?

He went up to the bed and shook one of the arms, covered by tin foil and protruding grotesquely from the body of the bottle; he looked down where, through slits in the long pasteboard neck, he could see the half-closed eyes and the wide, flat mouth.

"Freda! Freda!" he shouted in terror.

But Freda would not speak; and in a moment the frightened child was running through the corridors of the fourth floor. Here he came upon Tompkins, restoring the boots to their places before his sisters' doors. Tompkins, brought to survey the figure on the bed, had no difficulty in analyzing the situation.

"If you please, madam," said he, reporting the affair at once to Miss Finch, "Freda's been out to one of her German parties, and she's lying there on her bed, dressed up like a bloomin' champagne bottle. And," added he, "if you'll excuse me for mentioning the fact, madam, she's a bit in need of the hice pail 'erself."

Five minutes later Miss Finch, a figure of righteousness, was towering over the prostrate masquerader.

"You must leave the house at once!" commanded she. "Your month's wages will be paid to you; and I never want to see you again."

A wail of terror broke from the little figure in blue pyjamas. "You're not going to send her away—forever! Oh, Miss Finch, please don't send Freda away! She's mine; she's mine; she's mine!"

"Yes, Percival," said Miss Finch coldly; "Freda's a bad girl, and we must get you someone else."

"She's not bad; she's good!" cried the child; and in a paroxysm of grief he threw himself on the pasteboard figure, now sitting dazedly upright.

The pasteboard pressed roughly against his flesh; his tears fell on the long tin-foil neck; and in a groping fury of tenderness he sought the mouth, showing through its tin-foil casing.

Brought to her senses by the child's grief, Freda drew him up in the grotesque silver arms.

"It is true, precious little one!" said the girl. "I have been bad; and now I must leave you. In time you will forget me; but remember always that there is one who loves you." And she left him with her warm tears on his head.

That night and for many nights afterward the lonely little boy sobbed himself to sleep there among the five-hundred-dollar furnishings provided by his solicitous mother to form a taste for correct forms. The frieze of painted figures taken from a Persian manuscript looked coldly down on him; and there, in his little bed—painted a deep Persian blue—he gathered into his arms a fifty-dollar zebra.

The zebra's eyes did not glow in the darkness like those of the fairy doll; and, in spite of an expensive inner organism, it had no words of comfort. Yet Percival knew that he needed comfort now as much as did ever little Wassilissa.

Editor's Note—This is the first of two papers, the second of which will appear in a fortnight.

A SCRAP OF PAPER

(Continued from Page 5)

"Where's that paper?" cried Masterman. "Where is it?" He was not so young as once upon a time, and sedentary occupations had softened his muscles, but nerve force lent the muscles fictitious strength. He shook the crook savagely. "Where's that paper?"

Then Connors found speech:

"What's the matter here? Leggo this man! I'm Connors, of the detective bureau. Leggo him ——"

Masterman glared at the detective.

"Shut up!" roared the master of transportation. Then to Harry: "Where's that paper?"

"Connors, take this crazy man off me," demanded the crook. "Take him off!"

The detective placed a hand on Masterman's shoulder.

"Look here, Mr. Masterman, I'm taking this man to headquarters, and ——"

Masterman looked at the detective again, and Connors withered.

"Don't you dare to interfere with me," he said. "Bring this man to my office at once! *Now!*"

Of course it was Connors' duty to take his prisoner to headquarters; but Connors was wise in his day and generation. He knew that the word of Martin Masterman came very near to being law in the city where he lived, and elsewhere in the country. So while gaping hundreds decided that Handsome Harry must be some sneak thief who had assaulted the proud integrity of the Masterman offices, the three multimillionaires and the detective herded the international crook down the side street and into the Masterman Building. Up a flight of stairs and to the private office where the missing document had been signed, Masterman, still gripping the coat of the crook, led the way. At the door he waved Connors back.

"This is private business. Wait outside!" he snapped, and slammed the door in the plain-clothes man's face. Connors knew better than to show resentment. He shrugged his shoulders and turned to a clerk:

"What's up anyway?" he asked.

"A paper blew out a window. Guess that guy found it," was the answer.

"Ah," said Connors. He composed himself to wait. In ten minutes Masterman came out.

He pressed a slip of paper into Connors' hand. The detective looked at it. It was an order on the Masterman cashier for two hundred dollars.

"What's this for?" queried Connors.

"The time I've made you lose," said Masterman.

"And where's my man?"

"You don't want him," said Masterman quietly.

Connors looked into the hard gray eyes of the master of transportation.

"But I've got my report to make out. Some one may have seen ——"

"He was a sneak thief; I sent you after him. Later I refused to make a charge, and asked you to say nothing about the matter. I have some slight influence with your commissioner, Connors. I am going to recommend to him that you be made a sergeant. Do you understand? Good morning."

"Thank you, sir; good morning," replied Connors. He understood that he had his choice of being broken or promoted. He preferred promotion, so he made no report of the interrupted arrest of Handsome Harry Mack. That incident was never placed upon police record; for the threads of the Masterman power ran high and low, and into the farthest corners.

III

WHEN the three richest men in America, accompanied by Handsome Harry, reached Masterman's office, the latter took charge.

"Hand over that paper," he ordered.

Handsome Harry looked bewildered.

"What paper? What's all this about? I tell you, I'm an American citizen with rights! I'll have the police ——"

"You picked up a paper from the street," interrupted Masterman. "These gentlemen saw you. No possible mistake, Blaisdell, Cardigan?"

The two men had got a good look at Handsome Harry from the window of the other office, and his dress was distinctive. This beyond question was the man. But they had not seen him enter the offices of Bryant, Manners & Company. Blaisdell and Cardigan had been on the stairs at that moment, and Masterman, not knowing for which person on the crowded street to look, did not know of that excursion either.

"He read it too," said Blaisdell.

"Hand it over," demanded Masterman.

"I don't know what you're talking about," insisted Mack.

Cardigan's jaws set heavily. His great fists were knotted.

"Take off your clothes," he ordered.

Handsome Harry had heard enough about the three men in the room with him to realize that they had slight respect for such trifles as a man's constitutional rights or the law. Further, he had read the paper and knew that they must be desperate, that he was playing with death. Sullenly he removed his garments. Every inch of them was searched by all three financiers, but the paper was not produced.

"But he had it," piped the thin voice of Blaisdell.

"I saw him read it," rumbled the bass of Cardigan.

Masterman looked at the crook.

"You know who we are," he said. "You know what that paper means. Where did you put it?"

Handsome Harry had donned his clothing again. Being dressed brought back his courage, which had been at its lowest ebb while he stood, naked, before these three men, whose very fright rendered them the more dangerous.

"I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

Masterman surveyed him a moment.

"The detective outside had arrested you; you're some sort of criminal. I think that a word from me will make it certain that you'll be confined in jail until you're willing to tell us where that paper is. Shall I give him that word?"

Handsome Harry was no fool; he knew that, dangerous and powerful as these men were, he would be safe at their hands so long as they believed he knew of the whereabouts of the paper and would not divulge his knowledge. It was time to end his bluff.

"And suppose I told him—or any man that's my jailer—the contents of that paper? Think he'd let me go and help me get it, or not?"

There was force to this remark. The multimillionaires knew, each of them, that they'd pay millions for the return of that paper. The veriest tyro would know its value as a lever for the prying up of blackmail.

"How much do you want for it?" demanded Masterman.

"Send Connors away," said Handsome Harry.

It was then that Masterman got rid of the detective. Returning, he repeated his question.

"I haven't decided yet," said Harry. "I'll have to think it over."

"Why temporize with him, Masterman?" demanded Cardigan. "Send out for some dope; put him to sleep; take him down to my place on Long Island—I'll make him talk."

He glared at Handsome Harry, and nervousness again attacked the crook. But his position was as strong as theirs.

"Oh, you won't do anything like that," he said. "A good many people have seen me come in here. You come an inch nearer me and I'll yell at the top of my lungs. You can't vouch for all your clerks outside. Some one of them will talk, you know that. You wouldn't really dare to kill me."

"No? Are you certain?" asked Cardigan.

"Not while a friend of mine has that paper," sneered Handsome Harry.

"Who's the friend?" asked Masterman.

Handsome Harry took a cigarette from a case and lighted it.

"Oh, don't be silly," he yawned. "Let's get down to business. How much for that paper? And let's not have any argument about it. I'm no fool; I know exactly what it's worth to me. How much is it worth to you?"

"I'll give you ten thousand dollars for it," said Masterman quickly.

"And I want one million," smiled Handsome Harry. "Not a cent less! What do you say? You can't murder me. Even if you could in safety, you'd not dare until you got that paper back. The whip hand is mine. Gentlemen, what's the answer?"

Just as brainy in his own way as any of his three antagonists was this crook. Masterman realized that at once. A million was a fearful price to pay for one second's carelessness; but the crook spoke truly; he held the whip hand. More important, he had the brains to perceive what he held.

"A million," said Masterman slowly. "Well, Mr.—er ——"

"Mack," said Handsome Harry, discarding the titled alias in favor of the one whereby he was known to the police.

"Well, Mr. Mack, how long will it take you to get that paper?"

"Not long after you've handed me my price," smiled Handsome Harry. The smile was a proof of his histrionic abilities, for it was nearing half past twelve. In a few moments young Grant, in whose pocket was the document, would go for his luncheon. If he happened to put his hand into his pocket—well, Handsome Harry smiled, but the Spartan boy who said nothing about the fox gnawing at his vitals had nothing on Handsome Harry Mack at that moment.

"You don't expect a million in advance!" cried Blaisdell.

"You don't expect me to return that paper before I get it, do you?" sneered Handsome Harry.

It was an impasse. Masterman shrugged his shoulders.

"Will your friend give the paper back to you?"

"If he doesn't you're in a million," replied Mack.

He lighted another cigarette and grinned cheerfully. He had the three richest men in America—in the world, perhaps—on the hip, and the situation suited him right down to the ground.

"And you'll be back here—how soon?"

"You'll have time to raise the cash," said Harry. "Cashiers' checks on any good bank will do me. And don't try any nonsense! I won't have the paper with me when I return. I'll have it near, but not on me. I'll phone you before I'm coming. I'll fix my plans and you follow them. Understand? And now I guess I'll be going."

"Don't you trust us?" demanded the ashen, shaking Blaisdell.

"About as far," said Handsome Harry, "as I could throw an ocean liner over my shoulder left-handed."

Masterman pressed a bell with his foot; he pressed it twice swiftly, and then gave one long ring. It was a well understood signal. It meant that the person just leaving the private office was to be shadowed by private operatives of the Greenham Detective Agency, situated on the ground floor of the Masterman Building. The Greenham Detective Agency existed for the sole purpose of aiding Mr. Martin Masterman, and it employed the cleverest sleuths that money could retain. Needless to state, Mr. Masterman had no intention of paying a million to Handsome Harry if such payment could be avoided.

"You understand the vital importance of our getting that paper back," said Masterman. "The high price you name proves your understanding of its importance. We'll pay the price; but in return for that price we demand speed. We want that paper before it's been read by others."

"I'm not anxious to have its value lessened by others seeing it and blabbing," said Handsome Harry. "I'll phone you as soon as I see my friend. You do as I tell you to do, or—well, there's newspapers that'll pay something for that paper!"

He rose, and stood a moment looking round the office. In a few days he'd have squared the police with a few thousands, and he, Handsome Harry Mack, millionaire, would have an office like this. Not that he intended to work, but he desired to enter society, and opening a bank or something would afford an entering wedge.

"Good morning, gentlemen," he said with superb aplomb. Then he left the office.

Cardigan's mouth opened; Blaisdell's lips parted. But the mighty Masterman cut off their speech.

"Don't bark," he ordered. "I know what you've got to say; but it was your fault as much as mine. You ought to have hung onto it when I opened the door ——"

"We ought to have done what I suggested," growled Cardigan. "Drug him and ——"

"Gentlemen, I'm doing this," said Masterman.

"Are you paying the whole million?" said Blaisdell with a snarl.

"A million?" Masterman smiled. "I had to let him go; but I think the Greenham people will save me from that expenditure. There are ways—and ways."

He turned and spoke into a tube that connected with the office of the manager of the detective office downstairs:

"Man leaving my office; going to get valuable paper; blackmail—millions. Be careful; get him—when he has the paper!"

Not much, but enough for such shrewd people as the Greenhams.

Masterman let the tube drop back into its socket in his desk, and wiped his forehead with a trembling hand. Man of iron nerve that he was, this morning had tried him to the limit. He stared at Cardigan and Blaisdell. They were in worse shape than he, for self-repression was a religion with Masterman, and he held himself in as they could not.

"What'll we do now?" quavered Blaisdell. "Where could he have put that paper? Why didn't we see him hand it to a friend—if he did? Why ——"

Burly Cardigan frowned little Blaisdell into silence. The ex-laborer looked almost pleadingly at Masterman.

"Martin," he said, "it's going to be hell waitin' to hear from the Greenhams or that crooked shrimp Mack. Can't you suggest something we could be doing?"

"Yes," said Masterman. "A drink."

He procured a bottle and glasses from a recess in the wall. That recess was approached only on the most important occasions, usually to celebrate some tremendous coup on the part of the great master of transportation; but to-day Masterman and his companions were in no mood for celebrations; they were drinking to settle their nerves.

IV

HANDSOME Harry Mack paused a moment in the street and drew a long breath. On a broken flush he had once forced an opponent to lay down four kings, when there were six thousand dollars in the pot, and he had never turned a hair. He had nerve to spare; like a Bret Harte gambler, he was always cool. But now for once he was unnerved. He had met the most powerful man on earth, looked him in the eye, and played his cards to victory! The man who could do this thing was destined to mighty things. A million dollars was the prize; but—a million was but the start. There was no reason why the nerve and brain and cool resource of Handsome Harry Mack, backed by this first million, should not carry him to that very pinnacle which Masterman occupied. A few minutes ago he'd thought of the pleasure of entering society; now he decided that he would use his fortune to attain power. He started up the side street toward the offices of Bryant, Manners & Company.

It was a blowy day, such as often comes in early June. One of those errant winds that had wafted the document into the crook's hands now lifted the hat from his head. He turned swiftly and leaped after it, and caught it in a dozen yards. As he ran he passed a man whom he had once seen in Monte Carlo. The man had been pointed out as a detective from America in search of a missing bank defaulter. The man was coming toward Harry, and as the international crook clapped his hat upon his head the detective passed by and continued up the side street without so much as a glance at Harry. But the crook's keen eyes hardened as he stared back at the Masterman Building. He remembered what was gossip among the denizens of the underworld—that Martin Masterman's vaults were the best protected in the world, both by mechanical and by human agencies.

It was the last that counted. For through the crooked channels of its information had seeped to the underworld the news that in the Masterman Building itself were stationed, under charge of Robert and Terence Greenham, a score of detectives who, having made their mark in police, secret-service or private agency circles, had been attracted to the financier's service by reason of the salaries he paid.

For ten seconds Handsome Harry stared at the Masterman Building; then he turned and continued up the side street. He walked past the offices of Bryant, Manners & Company, for he was clever enough to

give his opponents credit for brains even in the moment of his own triumph. He blessed fate for the wind that had taken off his hat and made him alive to his danger. His lips were smiling as he turned up the adjoining street, smiling at the good luck that was still with him, that had given him warning when, overconfident, he had been about to betray himself into the hands of Masterman's detectives.

He had never a doubt in the world but that the man he had recognized had been upon his trail, and that undoubtedly there were a dozen others, whom he could not recognize, round him now, in the throng that crowded the sidewalk. Martin Masterman was not the man to give ten thousand dollars, much less a million, to any man on any threats, without an effort to avoid payment. And Handsome Harry, flushed with triumph, had almost forgotten that. Almost, but not quite! The smile left his lips and his mouth became grim as he walked on with a briskness that would deceive those following him into thinking that he had some definite objective.

He looked at his watch and found that it was twenty-five minutes past twelve. It was absurd to hope to throw those whom he knew were upon his trail off the scent in five minutes, and gain the office of Bryant, Manners & Company. As he recognized this fact, and its important corollary, that Grant might find the paper in his pocket, he set his wits to work. He stepped into a cigar store and entered the telephone booth. He got the bucket shop in a moment.

"I'd like to speak to Mr. Grant."

"Not here."

He choked back an exclamation. His scheming brain had evolved a plan whereby he hoped to get Grant to meet him, away from the presence of the following detectives, and before, if Fate willed, the clerk had found the paper in his pocket. And Grant was not there. He might at this moment be gloating over the document that meant millions to Handsome Harry Mack!

"Not there?" His voice was cool enough, though his temples pounded. "Thought he didn't go to lunch until half past twelve."

"Went at noon to-day," came the answer.

"Where does he lunch?" asked Harry.

"Search me," was the cheerful reply. "Any message?"

"N-no," said Handsome Harry.

He hung up the receiver and was about to open the booth door when he saw a man lounge into the store and toss a coin upon the cigar case. There is something about the detective that tells the crook of his natural enemy, even as there is about the crook an aura that informs the detective of the presence of his natural prey. Handsome Harry smiled and dropped another coin in the slot.

"Plaza 90,000," he said. And a moment later: "Mr. Robinson? Not there? Wrong number? Excuse me."

Then he rang off and stepped out of the booth. In the door of the cigar store he stood long enough to note that the cigar-purchasing gentleman had entered the booth. Then he walked up Broadway, still smiling. For the detective, if he inquired what number Harry had just asked for, would be given Plaza 90,000, a number that had hopped into Harry's brain from nowhere at all. Harry knew detectives; it was a million to one that the sleuth would never think of asking if there had been a previous number requested by the crook. And million to one shots are worth playing when millions are at stake.

But his momentary triumph, if such it could be called, was soon lost sight of in the presence of the defeat that had swept his desperate plans away. Grant had left the bucket shop before Harry had been able to speak with him! Even now the clerk might be reading the precious document; even now he might be planning to seize the profit that belonged to Harry Mack. He stopped short and clenched his hands. He dared not go in search of Grant; the detectives following him would undoubtedly arrest him on some trumped-up charge the moment he spoke to anyone—and arrest that "anyone" too! Furthermore, there were hundreds of restaurants and lunch-rooms in the downtown district; to which of these could he turn with any real hope of finding Grant?

Just then a saloon near by caught his eye; he entered it, had a stiff drink at the bar, and then sat down at a table in the rear, where "Business Men's Lunch" was served. The drink gave back to him that nerve that Grant's absence had shaken. He was himself again; he was able to feel real mirth as he noticed two men enter and line up at the bar. They were men he had never seen before, so far as he knew; and they did not wear the broad shoe of the detective who has been promoted from the uniformed force. Apparently they were prosperous business or professional men. But the eye of Handsome Harry was at its keenest now, and at its keenest it is doubtful if any detective living could have hidden his occupation from it.

Now that he had got his nerve back again, it amused the crook to know that he was followed. In his own good time he would elude his trailers, clever though they might be; he had no fear of his ability to do that, if he were given time. Handsome Harry ate his steak and fried potatoes leisurely and heartily; he ordered pie, and washed it down with beer. It was a little after one when he rose and paid his check. Grant should be back from luncheon by now.

There was a booth in the bar. He used it, once to call up the bucket shop and learn that Grant had not yet returned, and once to call up a hotel and ask for a Mr. Clarkin, another mythical friend. Then he came out of the booth, and any lingering doubt as to the identity of the two men who had lingered drinking at the bar was dispelled when one of them entered the booth.

Handsome Harry had another drink, to settle nerves a little ruffled again. An hour is a long luncheon time for a clerk in a busy bucket shop. What if Grant had read the paper? He gulped his drink and shook his shoulders to dispel this thought. His every fiber itched to race to the bucket shop and meet Grant upon his return; but this he dared not do. He could only wait and phone again. And while he waited he would give his friends the Greenhams a chase.

He did. He led them to the Battery, a twenty-minute walk. He had another drink there, before telephoning the bucket shop. Grant had not returned! He took a surface car and rode for some blocks, then once again he telephoned, as in the other cases, asking for a second number after learning that Grant was still absent. The clerk who answered the telephone expressed ignorance of any business that could detain Grant so long. Even the various drinks that he had absorbed could no longer give to Handsome Harry the nerve that Grant's strange absence was destroying. For Harry had asked, this last time, if Grant had worn his coat when he went out to luncheon, and was told that he had. There was perspiration on his forehead when, three-quarters of an hour later, he called up the office of Bryant, Manners & Company for the last time.

"Grant hasn't come back from lunch," said the telephone clerk. "And if you're a friend of his and happen to see him to-night, better tell him to frame up a good excuse for the boss. Mr. Manners is sore as can be."

There was no doubt any longer! Grant, as might have been expected from the very beginning of Handsome Harry's desperate grab for fortune, had found and read the paper signed by the millionaires! Handsome Harry knew it, and the knowledge made his light-gray eyes darken, made his muscles tighten and his thin lips harden. Inured to defeat in his schemes, as is every crook, yet he was not the sort to accept defeat easily. For a moment the anger that swept over him left him speechless. Finally he managed to ask:

"Can you tell me where he lives? This is Sir Fitz-Roy Bray talking. He was to show me some of the sights of interest in your charming city ——" Once started he lied fluently, and the cultured English accent that had been missing in previous inquiries returned to him. "He was to take me out to-night, you know, and I've discovered that I have a previous engagement ——"

The telephone clerk whistled softly to himself. He had not known that Grant and the Englishman, whose custom was such an asset to the bucket shop, were at all friendly. But he did not keep the crook waiting for an answer.

"Just a minute, Sir Fitz-Roy, sir. One second. I'll get it."

And while Handsome Harry drew a furtive hand across a wet forehead, the telephone clerk looked up the address requested. A moment later: "His address is —— West Twenty-third Street. But if he ain't there, Sir Fitz-Roy, I'll gladly tell him when he comes in here, if he does. Maybe somethin's happened to him though. It ain't like him to leave his work all afternoon. And if anythin' has happened to him, and you want to see the town, I'd be glad ——"

"Thank you," said Handsome Harry. "Perhaps I will."

He was downtown now, near City Hall, having ridden in a surface car between his Twenty-third Street and his final telephone calls. He wished that he had had sense enough to ask Grant's address earlier. That he hadn't was proof that during the past few hours his acuteness had been waning. He would go to that address just as soon as he had thrown off the scent the detectives who followed him. And that, given a little time, was simple.

He entered the lobby of a building near City Hall Park. He knew its various entrances perfectly. Like the experienced crook that he was, he had spent several afternoons in familiarizing himself with the floor plans of most of the larger office buildings on the main thoroughfares. He rarely neglected details that might later aid him in a get-away. That care repaid him now, for he knew the building which he entered.

He waited in the lobby a moment, until the starter signaled a car to go aloft, then he sprang forward just in time to avoid being caught by the closing door of the elevator. He might have been crushed by the door and rising car. That was a risk of the trade. "The fourth floor," snapped Harry. "I'm in a hurry!"

Potent is money. The elevator was an express, due to make no stops before the twelfth floor; but it stopped and Handsome Harry bounded into the corridor. While Greenham operatives took later elevators and combed the upper floors, he had walked down three flights of stairs that led to a side exit, and was out of the building. A few minutes later, and he was on an elevated train. In twenty minutes he was ringing the doorbell at Grant's boarding house.

"Is Mr. Grant in?" he inquired.

The slattern maid looked at him. She shook her head.

"He ain't here."

"Has he been here this afternoon?"

This time she nodded.

"About a hour ago."

"When will he be back?"

"He won't be back. He paid his bill and packed his suitcase and left. He said he'd send for his trunk next week, maybe. But he's gone for good! And he didn't leave no address."

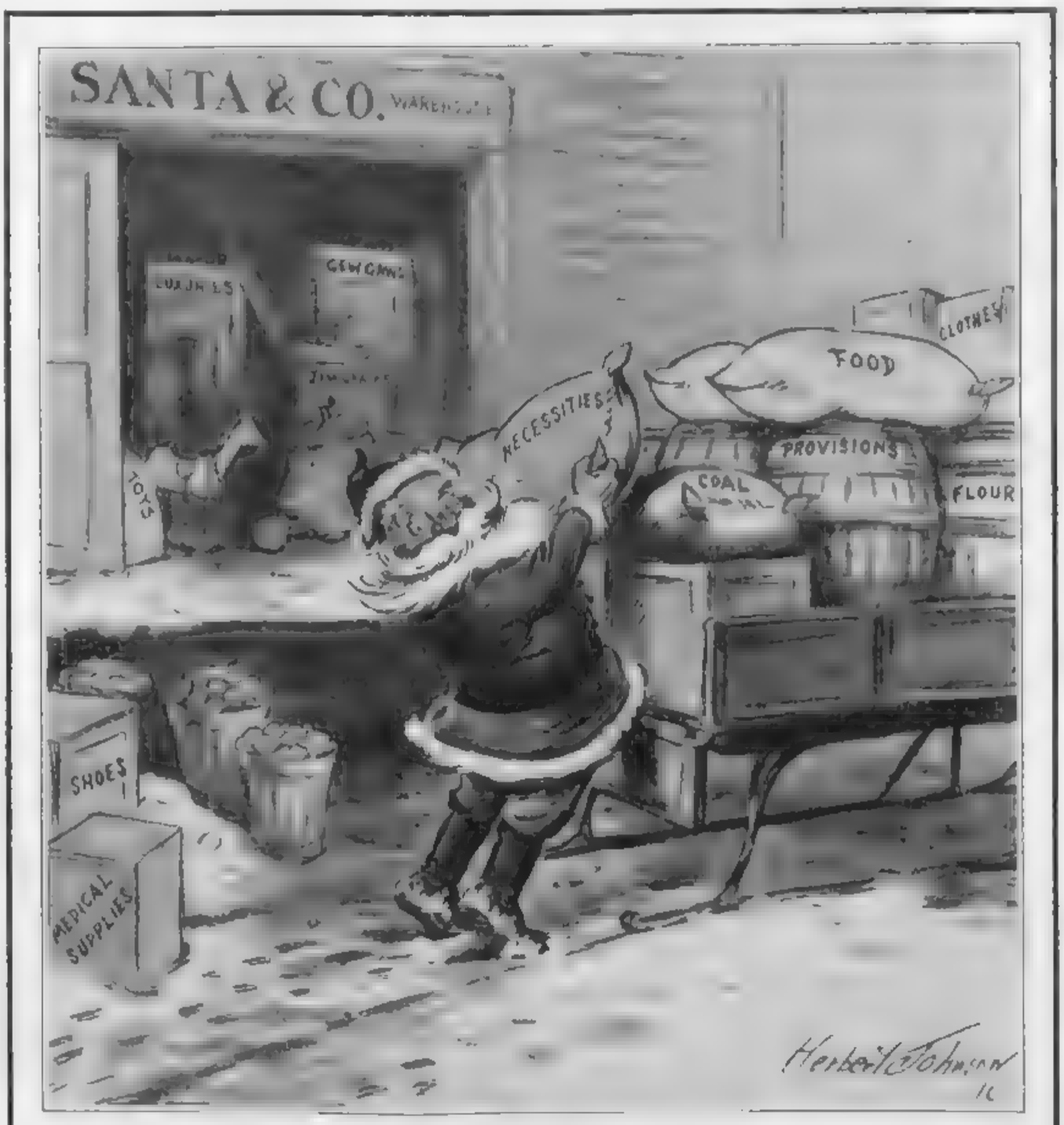
Before this doubt had departed; now hope went the same way. Young Grant had read the paper, and had disappeared, that from some unknown point of vantage he might reap the reward that should have been Handsome Harry's, but for the meddling of Detective Connors. There and then Handsome Harry swore an oath to get even with that gentleman of the police.

The slattern slavey watched him with interest as he went down the path through the narrow grass-plot that fronts the block of houses where Grant had roomed.

"I'll bet," she told herself, "that Mr. Grant owes him money an' is duckin' town on that account."

She could not know that she was looking upon a man upon whose door Opportunity had knocked, only to pass along before he could answer.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



The First Load

AMERICAN HORSES

(Concluded from Page 13)

on the stroke of the hour, and she explained that the money to redeem the jewels had arrived. The Crédit Lyonnais had sent it over from Paris. She seemed a bit puzzled about it. She had telegraphed the Crédit Lyonnais yesterday to send her eighteen thousand dollars. And she had expected that the French banking house would have arranged for the payment of the money through its English correspondent. But its telegram directed her to go to the United Atlantic Express Company and receive the money.

A few minutes cleared up the puzzle. The office of the company is on the Strand above the Savoy. Mrs. Farmingham went to the manager and showed him a lot of papers she had in an official-looking envelope. After a good bit of official pother the porters carried out a big portmanteau, a sort of heavy sole-leather traveling case, and put it into the carriage. Mrs. Farmingham came to Hargrave where he stood by the door.

"Now what do you think!" she said. "Of all the stupid idiots, give me a French idiot to be the stupidest; they have actually sent me eighteen thousand dollars in gold!"

"Well," said Hargrave, "perhaps you asked them to send you eighteen thousand dollars in gold."

She closed her mouth firmly for a moment and looked him vacantly in the face.

"What did I do?" she said, in the old manner of addressing an inquiry to herself. "The major wanted gold and perhaps I said gold. Why, yes, I must have said I wanted eighteen thousand dollars in gold. Well, at any rate, here's the money to pay you for the sapphires. I'll telegraph the Crédit Lyonnais to send me your eighteen hundred, and you can come round to the Ritz for it in the morning."

She wished Hargrave to see that the telegram was properly worded, so the stupid French would not undertake to ship another bag of coin to her. He wrote it out, so there could be no mistake, and sent it from Charing Cross on the way back to the club.

Hargrave had to get two porters to carry the sole-leather portmanteau into his room at the Empire Club. Mrs. Farmingham did not wait to receive the sapphires. She said he could bring them over to the Ritz after he had counted the money. She wanted a cup of tea; he could come along in an hour. It took Hargrave the whole of the hour to verify the money. The case had been shipped, the straps were knotted tight and the lock was sealed. He had to get a man from the outside to break the lock open. The man said it was an American lock and he hadn't any implement to turn it.

There were eighteen thousand dollars in American twenty-dollar gold pieces packed in sawdust in the bag. The Crédit Lyonnais had followed Mrs. Farmingham's directions to the letter. Such is the custom of the stupid French! She had asked for eighteen thousand dollars in gold, and they had sent her eighteen thousand dollars in gold. Hargrave put one of the pieces into his waistcoat pocket. He wanted to show Mrs. Farmingham how strangely the stupid French had made the blunder of doing precisely what she asked. Then he strapped up the portmanteau, pushed it under the bed, went out and locked the door. He asked the chief steward to put a man in the corridor to see that no one went into his room while he was out. Then he got the sapphires out of the safe and went over to the Ritz.

He met Mrs. Farmingham in the corridor coming out to her carriage.

"Ah, Mr. Hargrave," she said, "here you are. I just told the clerk to call you up and tell you to bring the sapphires over in the morning when you came for the draft. I promised Lady Herbert last night to come out to tea at five. Forgot it until a moment ago."

She took Hargrave along out to the carriage and he gave her the envelope. She tore off the corner, emptied the sapphires into her hand, glanced at them, and dropped them loose into the pocket of her coat.

"Was the money all right?" she said.

"Precisely all right," replied the American. "The Crédit Lyonnais, with amazing stupidity, sent you precisely what you asked in your telegram." And he showed her the twenty-dollar gold piece.

"Well, well, the stupid darlings!" Then she laughed in her big, energetic manner. "I'm not always a fool. Come in the morning at nine. Good night, Mr. Hargrave."

And the carriage rolled across Piccadilly into Bond Street in the direction of Grosvenor Square and Lady Herbert's.

The fog was settling down over London. Moving objects were beginning to take on the loom of gigantic figures. It was getting difficult to see.

It must have taken Hargrave half an hour to reach the club. The first man he saw when he went in was Sir James, his hands in the pockets of his tweed coat and his big figure blocking the passage.

"Hello, Hargrave!" he cried. "What have you got in your room that old Ponsford won't let me go up?"

"Not nine hundred horses!" replied the American.

The Baronet laughed. Then he spoke in a lower voice:

"It's extraordinarily lucky that I ran over to the Sorbonne. Come along up to your room and I'll tell you. This place is filling up with a lot of thirsty swine. We can't talk in any public room in it."

The Woman's Card Had Surprised Him; But the Name on It Brought Him Up in His Chair

They went up the great stairway, lined with paintings of famous colonials celebrated in the English wars, and into the room. Hargrave turned on the light and poked up the fire. Sir James sat down by the table. He took out his three newspapers and laid them down before him.

"My word, Hargrave," he said, "old Arnold is a clever beggar! He cleared the thing up clean as rain." The Baronet spread the newspapers out before him.

"We knew here at the Criminal Investigation Department that this thing was a cipher of some sort, because we knew about these horses. We had caught up with this business of importing horses. We knew the shipment was on the way as I explained to you. But we didn't know the port that it would come into."

"Well," said the American, "did you find out?"

"My word," he cried, "old Arnold laughed in my face. 'Ach, monsieur,' he cried, mixing up several languages, 'it is Heidel's cipher! It is explained in the seventeenth Criminal Archive at Gratz. Attend and I will explain it, monsieur. It is always written in two paragraphs. The first paragraph contains the secret message, and the second paragraph contains the key to it. *Voila!* This message is in two paragraphs:

"'"P. L. A. shipped nine hundred horses on freight steamer Don Carlos from N. Y.

"'"Have the bill of lading handed over to our agent to check up."

"'The hidden message is made up of certain words and capital letters contained in the first paragraph, while the presence of the letter *t* in the second paragraph indicates the words or capital letters that count in the first. One has only to note the numerical position of the letter *t* in the second paragraph in order to know what capital letter or word counts in the first paragraph.'"

The Baronet took out a pencil and underscored the words in the second paragraph of the printed cipher: "Have *the* bill of lading handed over *to* our agent *to* check up."

"You will observe that the second, the eighth and the eleventh words in this paragraph begin with the letter *t*. Therefore, the second, the eighth and the eleventh capital letters or words in the first paragraph make up the hidden message."

And again with his pencil he underscored the letters of the first paragraph of the cipher: "P. *L.* A. shipped nine hundred horses *on* freight steamer *Don* Carlos from N. *Y.*"

"So we get 'L, on, Don.'"

"London!" cried Hargrave. "The nine hundred horses are to come into London!"

And in his excitement he took the gold piece out of his pocket and pitched it up. He had been stooping over the table. The fog was creeping into the room. And in the uncertain light about the ceiling he missed the gold piece and it fell on the table before Sir James. The gold piece did not ring, it fell dull and heavy, and the big Baronet looked at it open-mouthed as though it had suddenly materialized out of the yellow fog entering the room.

"My word!" he cried. "One of the nine hundred horses!"

Hargrave stopped motionless like a man stricken by some sorcery.

"One of the nine hundred horses!" he echoed.

The Baronet was digging at the gold piece with the blade of his knife.

"Precisely! In the criminal argot a counterfeit American twenty-dollar gold piece is called a 'horse.'

"Look," he said, and he dug into the coin with his knife, "it's white inside, made of Babbitt metal, milled with a file and gold-plated. Where did you get it?"

The American stammered.

"Where could I have gotten it?" he murmured.

"Well," the Baronet said, "you might have got it from a big, old, pasty-faced Alsatian; that would be 'Dago' Muhlhouse. Or you might have got it from an energetic, middle-aged American woman posing as a social leader in the States; that would be 'Hustling' Annie; both bad crooks, at the head of an international gang of counterfeiters."

Dance Rocks

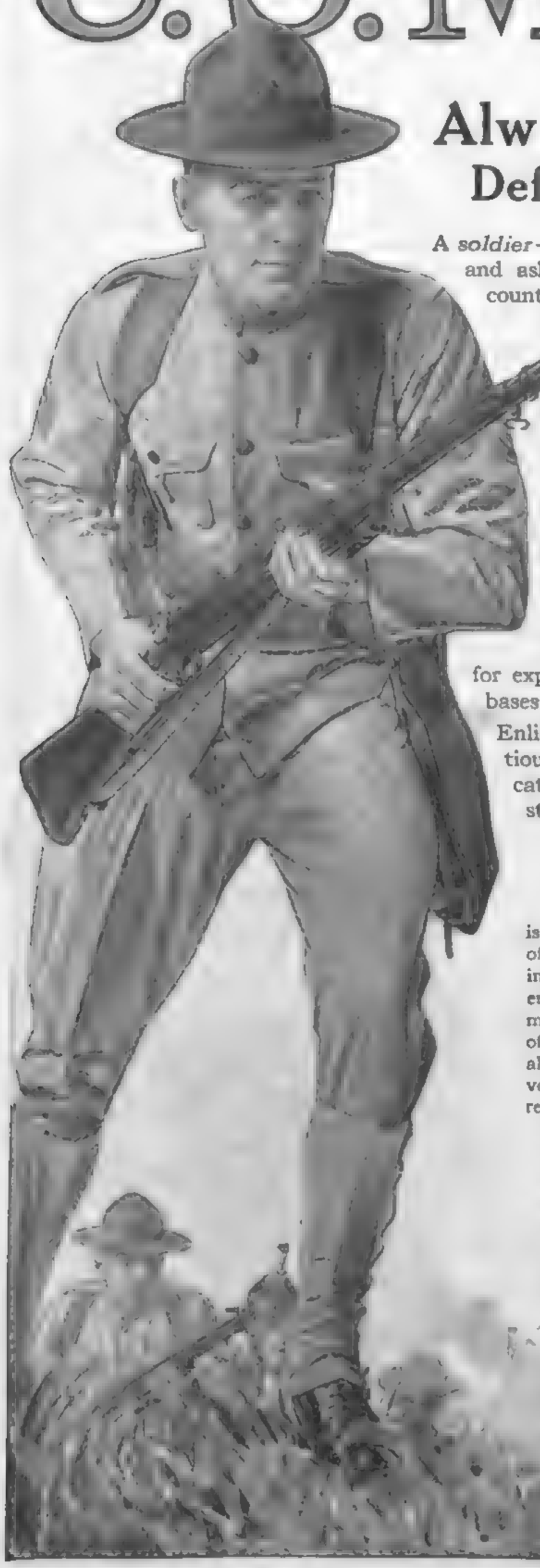
IN PARTS of California and Oregon there sometimes are found enormous oblong objects, smaller in the middle, usually obsidian in material. Such objects measure from a foot to a foot and a half in length, very perfectly made, very beautifully worked out, and very heavy. Not all scientists know what these objects are and sometimes they are classified by them as "unknown objects." A letter at hand from Mr. F. E. Gist, of Los Angeles, California, to a Chicago friend may give some information as to these "dance rocks," as they are properly called:

"The black obsidian dance rock sent you is made by the northern California or more properly the Klamath-Athapascan tribe. These rocks are used only at the White Deerskin Dance. Rich, indeed, is the Indian who possesses a few of these dance rocks—particularly if they are large ones and well chipped. They are handed down as heirlooms and they part with them only in case of dire necessity; and even then it is the tribal custom to pass them along to one of the tribe, receiving their value, rather than let them come into the possession of a white man.

"Few Indians, indeed, know the art of flint chipping, and the secret usually dies with the Indian. If he be selfish—as many are in this respect—the dance rocks owned by him and his immediate family are all broken squarely in the center and buried with the body. I spent much time and money in my collecting tours on the reservation endeavoring to ascertain the art of chipping, and all I could ever find out was that they were chipped by means of a deerhorn, the rock being heated to a certain temperature and pressed gently with the deerhorn, and the rough or loose particles removed by very tiny drops of cold water through a strainer while the rock was yet warm. Many a large dance rock was attempted; but so delicate is the task of chipping that they were broken and had to be made into smaller ones.

"There are three colors of dance rocks—white, red and black. The white are the most valuable, the red next, and then the black. The scarcity of the white and red materials, and the very delicate task of chipping the same, make the Indians prize those two most. Then, too, the color white seems to be a sacred color to them; and of course the red looks good to them, just as a red calico dress looks good to a squaw."

U.S. Marines



Always First—in the Defense of America

A *soldier*—the Marine is! Serving ashipboard; and ashore. Traveling from ocean to ocean, country to country, port to port. Ever ready to move; ready to do duty in any part of the world; and thoroughly on the job!

Marines are drilled as infantrymen, naval gunners, field artillerymen, and machine-gun operators. An unsurpassed military training!

Some are instructed in the radio; in signaling and range-finding; the planting of mines and handling of torpedoes; the management of boats; wall-scaling and intrenching; the building of roads and bridges, transportation of ordnance and mounting of big guns ashore; in short,—

The Marines are in every way *prepared* as landing parties from the battleships and cruisers of the Navy: for expeditionary duty and as defenders of naval advance bases, American legations and citizens.

Enlistment especially appeals to the young man ambitious to finish his schooling with a thorough military education, world-wide travel and personal adventures in strange lands among curious peoples.

Opportunity for Enlistment in the U. S. Marine Corps

is now afforded by Act of Congress authorizing an increased number of men. The pay is good, with extra pay for proficiency—for instance, with the rifle. Chances for promotion are excellent. The enlisted man can rise to be a non-commissioned officer, and, by meeting certain requirements, become a warrant or commissioned officer. Marine Corps training, which includes athletic sports of all kinds, produces splendid results in physical and mental development, and returns a man to his home healthier, more self-reliant and better in every respect.

The enlistment age is 18 to 35 years. There are Marine Corps Recruiting Stations in all the principal cities. WRITE for address of your nearest recruiting station and booklet on duties, experiences, opportunities and pay.

Parents Who Are Thinking of Military Education

for their sons, and every person partaking of the spirit of patriotism, as well as men who desire to enlist in the service of their country, are invited to write for the booklet describing life aboard ship and ashore, the globe around, as experienced in the Marine Corps service.

Drop a postal; or use the Corner Coupon, addressing—

U. S. Marine Corps Recruiting Publicity Bureau
117 East 24th Street New York City

This Booklet of Complete Information About the U.S. Marines—absorbingly interesting to all Americans, especially young men thinking of military service—sent on receipt of this corner.

*Your Name*_____

Address

Clip and mail to U. S. Marines, 117 East 24th St., New York City

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE RELIEF OF FRENCH WAR ORPHANS

(INCORPORATED 1916)

Principal Office, No. 120 Broadway (Rooms 1435–36) New York City

Appeal for Orphan Children of French Soldiers who have died in defense of France

It is reported that the number of French orphans who will ultimately need aid will be in excess of 400,000, and that there are at the present time 200,000 in ACTUAL WANT. The stupendous and crushing burden of the war will not permit the French Government to pay more than 10 francs ($2) per month per orphan, and it is NECESSARY FOR PRIVATE CHARITY TO CONTRIBUTE AT LEAST 15 FRANCS ($3) PER MONTH ADDITIONAL FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF EACH CHILD.

The AMERICAN SOCIETY has pledged itself to help several thousand orphans during the six months commencing Nov. 1, 1916, and it desires to increase the number as speedily as possible and to extend the period of assistance. It will be doubly helpful to those in need if they can be assured at the outset of this winter, which will be exceptionally hard upon France, that fixed aid from Americans can be relied upon to prevent actual suffering among orphans.

It is expected that the organization known as THE FATHERLESS CHILDREN OF FRANCE will be absorbed by and act as a branch of the AMERICAN SOCIETY.

America's debt long owed to France is incalculable. Without the aid given to the Colonists during the Revolution by the French, as individuals and as a nation, our struggle for independence would have failed. Warships, soldiers, munitions, supplies and money furnished by France, who thus impoverished herself, enabled us to win. Americans should make some return for the SERVICES and SACRIFICES of the FRANCE of LAFAYETTE and ROCHAMBEAU at the time WHEN AMERICA NEEDED HELP, and they should help discharge the debt, for which Washington pledged our "most unalterable gratitude." Contribution to the

FRENCH WAR ORPHANS FUND

offers the opportunity for all America to pay, at least in part, our DEBT of HONOR. The needs of the WAR ORPHANS OF FRANCE this winter peculiarly call for American sympathy and help and it would be fitting if, each American contributing according to his means, the AMERICAN SOCIETY were enabled, by bringing succor and comfort to the orphaned and suffering children of French soldiers, to extend a helping hand to France in a way that must touch the hearts of her people, now heroically and self-sacrificingly facing unparalleled calamities in a spirit which has thrilled the whole world.

The AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE RELIEF OF FRENCH WAR ORPHANS has been incorporated under the laws of the State of New York for the term of 15 years for the purpose of

(1) Raising funds by voluntary contributions to be used for the aid and relief of needy French children whose fathers have lost their lives as a result of the present war in Europe, and

(2) Systematizing and centralizing the collection of funds in the United States for that purpose and their effective distribution in France.

Its membership is divided into (1) "Founders," who contribute $500 or more per annum; (2) "Benefactors," who contribute $250 per annum, (3) "Sustaining Members," who contribute $100 per annum, and (4) "Contributing Members," who contribute up to $100 per annum.

The American Society undertakes, by means of its membership dues and a guaranty fund, to defray ALL the EXPENSES of management, collection and distribution of contributions for FRENCH WAR ORPHANS in order that the ENTIRE AMOUNT contributed for the aid and relief of these HELPLESS CHILDREN may be applied to their needs without any deduction for expenses of any kind, here or abroad.

The AMERICAN SOCIETY solicits contributions to its WAR ORPHANS FUND in order to be able to pledge fixed monthly aid towards the support of as large a number of FRENCH WAR ORPHANS as possible at the rate of **three dollars a month for each child.**

DONATIONS to the FRENCH WAR ORPHANS FUND should be sent by checks or post office money orders to the order of THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE RELIEF OF FRENCH WAR ORPHANS enclosed with a subscription in the form of the blank at the foot of this announcement, addressed to "THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE RELIEF OF FRENCH WAR ORPHANS, 120 Broadway, New York City," where all communications should be sent.

HONORARY VICE-PRESIDENTS

HIS EMINENCE JOHN CARDINAL FARLEY
Archbishop of New York
THE RIGHT REVEREND DAVID H. GREER,
Bishop of New York
THE HONORABLE WILLIAM G. SHARP,
Ambassador to the French Republic

THE HONORABLE EDWARD DOUGLASS WHITE
Chief Justice of the United States
THE HONORABLE JOSEPH H. CHOATE,
Former Ambassador to Great Britain
THE HONORABLE ROBERT BACON
Former Ambassador to the French Republic
THE HONORABLE MYRON T. HERRICK
Former Ambassador to the French Republic

DR. NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER
President Columbia University
DR. JOHN GRIER HIBBEN
President Princeton University
DR. JOHN H. FINLEY
Commissioner of Education of the State of New York

DIRECTORS OF THE SOCIETY

GEORGE F. BAKER, JR.
JAMES M. BECK
S. REMSEN BERRIAN
CLEVELAND H. DODGE, JR.
JAMES BYRNE
HERMAN LEADBOURNE, JR.
THOMAS COCHRAN
ROBERT WOODS BLISS
CHARLES STEWART DAVISON

EUGENE DELANO
DANIEL C. GOODRICH
WILLIAM J. GUTHRIE
ALEXANDER J. HEMPHILL
ADRIAN ISELIN
GEORGE GRANT MASON
CHARLES L. MAJOR
AMBROSE MONELL

J. PIERPONT MORGAN
VICTOR MORAWETZ
DAVID W. MORROW
CYRUS MYCK
STEPHEN PFEIFFER
JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER
STUYVESANT FISH ROOSEVELT
JOHN W. STAMPSON

CHARLES STEELE
JAMES STILLMAN
THOMAS SYNNOTT
EDWARD D. STONE
WILLARD D. STRAIGHT
HENRY M. TELFORD
EDWARD TUCK
FRANK A. VANDERLIP
GEORGE W. WICKERSHAM
ALEXANDER H. WIGGIN

OFFICERS

WILLIAM D. GUTHRIE, *President*
JAMES STILLMAN, *Vice-President*
J. PIERPONT MORGAN, *Vice-President*
ADRIAN ISELIN, *Vice-President*
THOMAS COCHRAN, *Treasurer*
ROBERT WOODS BLISS, *Assistant Treasurer*
CHARLES A. PRATT, *General Manager*
SYDENHAM VANNESTRICK, *Secretary*

DEPOSITARIES

MESSRS. J. P. MORGAN & CO.
NATIONAL CITY BANK
BANKERS TRUST COMPANY

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

To the American Society for the Relief of French War Orphans,
120 Broadway, New York City.

The undersigned hereby subscribes $ _____ to the WAR ORPHANS FUND of THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE RELIEF OF FRENCH WAR ORPHANS, and encloses herewith check / P.O. order for the amount, to be distributed by the Society for the relief of needy French children whose fathers have lost their lives as the result of the present war in Europe, in such manner and by such agencies as the Society may authorize.

Name _____

Address

Date _____, 191

DOWN AND UP

(Continued from Page 16)

wrote in substance that my plot was hackneyed and my style amateurish. He said, too, however, that no fiction character he had met in many months of manuscript reading had been so likable as my blundering hero. He told me I had a rare gift of character drawing. This bit of praise salved the smart of the rejection.

When spring came I was kept busy in the greenhouse, of which I had been appointed foreman on the parole of my predecessor. I was able to do very little writing until summer. Then I concentrated my efforts on a manuscript for entry in Collier's short-story contest. I wrote and rewrote it until it was as good a job as I knew how to do. But I mailed it with no expectation that it would be accepted.

In the third fall of my imprisonment, when I had been working alone a little over two years, for the first time I had the benefit of counsel from a constructive literary mentor. Previously I had been chary of spending any money for professional criticisms of my stories. I was acutely anxious about my family, for my wife had left, from the proceeds of my life-insurance loan, only enough to support her and the boy a few months longer. I did not feel justified in risking even a little of their precious cash on the chance that a paid adviser might be of practical aid to me in my writing. But a friend gave me ten dollars for a birthday present that year, and I used part of the unexpected windfall to procure an analysis of one of my stories by a critic whose advertisement I had seen in a magazine.

The manuscript I sent was entitled Just Jones. It was the story of an old clerk who feared he was about to lose his job, but who was promoted instead. I did not select the manuscript because I considered it especially strong, but for the reason that I had felt in my own heart every word as I wrote it. That story, I knew, was sincere.

To my delight I soon received from my new mentor an illuminative opinion that Just Jones would almost certainly be salable if a few changes were made in it. My critic explained that the introduction was superfluous writing. There, also, were two pages of anticlimax to be cut off.

I made the suggested revision carefully and returned the story for a second criticism. With it I sent another manuscript, Pure Gall, and a money order for the remainder of my ten dollars. The two stories were returned promptly. My mentor directed me to make some additional minor changes in the text of the first, and sent a detailed analysis of the faults of the second manuscript, with constructive advice for its revision. The critic's letter concluded with a proposal to offer the stories to editors personally after they should be rewritten. I made the corrections and again mailed the manuscripts. I authorized their sale by my agent.

A Rift in the Clouds

It was then the middle of December, just before the holiday time that is hardest of all the seasons for a prisoner to bear. Despite the cheering letters from my critic, I had an attack of the blues. I said to myself pessimistically that he was just jollying me. I thought constantly of my wife and boy. When the day before Christmas came I was heartsick. I looked ahead at the long, dark stretch of nineteen months that I still had to spend in prison. There seemed to be no likelihood of a rift in the black clouds of failure. I struggled to keep my courage; but that morning I knew I had lost faith in myself.

I had a trusty pass, which permitted me to go outside the prison walls, and had been working "out front." Just before noon I started to go inside for my dinner. The gatekeeper held out a strip of paper.

"Here's a telegram for you," he said with a friendly grin. "I took it over the phone a few minutes ago."

I unfolded the sheet and read the message:

"Adventure Magazine accepts Pure Gall and will pay $——. Congratulations and Merry Christmas!"

The name of my critic was subscribed.

"Pretty good news—huh?" chuckled the gatekeeper, who in common with most of the prison guards knew I had been writing unsuccessfully for two years and a half.

I did not respond. The message from New York dazed me. My story bought by Adventure! Why, that magazine was owned by the same company which published Everybody's, of which Trumbull White was editor! I could hardly believe the telegram was true. It must have been fully a minute after I read the words before I breathed. The turnkey opened the gate and I walked inside to my dinner. I was still unable to comprehend all the wonderful message meant to me. I ate mechanically and started back to work. When I came to the gate again the regular keeper was not on duty. The guard who had relieved him handed me a paper as he passed me out.

"The bookkeeper told me to give you this telegram," he said.

"Oh, I got that before dinner," I replied.

Good News in Big Doses

I put the paper in my pocket without reading it. I went out-of-doors and strode about over the snow-covered ground in exuberant enjoyment of the sensation of my first success as a writer. It was a cold day, but I glowed with warmth. I felt exalted—as if I actually had grown taller. After a while I reached into my pocket for the magical message. I wanted to gloat over it again. I chanced to pull out the second paper instead of the first. I unfolded it. My eyes gleamed at the words:

"McClure's will take Just Jones and wants a series of such office stories. Can you furnish? Answer."

My literary agent's name was signed, as to the other telegram.

I knew I was in my right senses; yet for a few moments I could not believe that my eyes were not playing a trick on me. The message in my hand seemed like some legerdemain. I had the uncanny feeling that the words I expected to read had changed while I looked at them. I did not comprehend for half a minute that there had been two telegrams.

At last the verity penetrated my consciousness. After thirty months of unsuccessful efforts I had sold two stories within an hour of each other. Doubtless my agent had made a call at the office of McClure's soon after going to see the editor of Adventure Magazine. I reasoned out that matter-of-fact explanation of the coincidence. Still, it seemed none the less a miracle. And, to make my joy the sweeter, this glorious good fortune had come the day before Christmas, at the time when my heart was sorest and the future looked all black. Another thought of delight flashed to me: I could send home a message that my dreams had started to come true.

I could brighten with hope the dreariness of my little family's Christmas.

I ran to the office of the warden and showed him the two telegrams. He read them, then jumped up from his chair and gripped my hand hard. He seemed almost as glad as I was myself.

"That's fine!" he exclaimed. "Can you supply the stories McClure's wants?"

"Yes, sir," I answered confidently. With a critic to guide me, I felt sure now of the road ahead. "I'd like your permission to telegraph that I can furnish them."

"Write the message here on my desk." He pushed a pad and pencil toward me. "I'll phone it downtown myself."

"And may I also wire the news to my wife?" I requested. "It would be the best Christmas present I could send home."

"Certainly!" he assented.

I wrote the two telegrams and went back to my work on the front lawn. The task was soon finished and I hurried to the greenhouse, all eagerness to begin at once the second story for McClure's. I thought of a plot that afternoon and started to write; but I did not turn out the manuscript hastily. I toiled over it for weeks before I sent it to my mentor. It came back with a most encouraging criticism. Only a few minor corrections were directed this time. I made them and returned the story to my agent for sale. McClure's bought it within a week; and I knew that my Bigelow & Judkins office series was assured.

It seemed to me after the third manuscript was sold that all my troubles were over. I now had a competent literary adviser, which had been my greatest need. The warden was enthusiastically facilitating my writing. I was full of confidence. Then, just as the difficulties were cleared from my road, the prison shops caught fire a bitter night in February, and in the conflagration the greenhouse was completely destroyed. I saved my desk, manuscripts and typewriter, but lost my good job.

I had been able to rescue only a few plants. The warden authorized me to put these in the propagating house, a glass-roofed shed built against the sunny side of the prison dining room. The propagating house was equipped with only one length of steam pipe; the building was intended to be used only in the spring, for growing seedling plants to be set out on the penitentiary farm. In mild weather the place would have been nearly comfortable. In February and March the temperature often was barely above the freezing point.

Writing Under New Difficulties

For two months I shivered in my makeshift quarters. I had no overcoat. As a substitute I wrapped an old blanket over my shoulders. Another blanket, wound about my legs, protected my feet from the cold brick floor. Writing in such circumstances was very different from composition on my old desk in the semitropical atmosphere of the greenhouse. It was hard to do consecutive work when I had to sit on my benumbed hands three or four times an hour to warm them. I caught cold, of course, and rheumatism stiffened my right shoulder, so that it was very painful to move the arm. But I had begun to succeed; I had earned some money for my wife and son by writing, and no mere physical difficulties could balk me now after my persistence through two years and a half of failure.

I completed three manuscripts while I tenanted the propagating house. Two of these my critic-agent sold after I had revised them. In March of that year, 1914, my first published story, Just Jones, appeared in McClure's. The day I received a copy of the magazine I took a holiday from writing and reveled in the satisfaction of seeing my name in print as author. I read the story over repeatedly. Then for the first time my dream, which had begun to come true, seemed wholly real.

Early that spring the warden transferred me to the front house assignment and made me foreman of the outside grounds of the prison. I enjoyed this work in quasi freedom; but there was a great deal to do and my opportunities for writing were curtailed by my tasks. Nevertheless I managed that year to complete sixteen short stories, eleven of which my critic sold for me. My wife's bank account, which had been very low, mounted again.

Among the gratifications the year 1914 brought to me was a letter from Collier's telling me that my story, A Problem in Eugenics, which I had entered in the contest nearly twelve months before, had been accepted. It did not win a prize, but the editor sent me a check larger by one hundred dollars than any payment I had received for a manuscript up to that time. Soon afterward I sold a business story to THE SATURDAY EVENING POST and had the satisfaction of mailing to my wife another large check. I began to feel very prosperous.

A Letter to the Governor

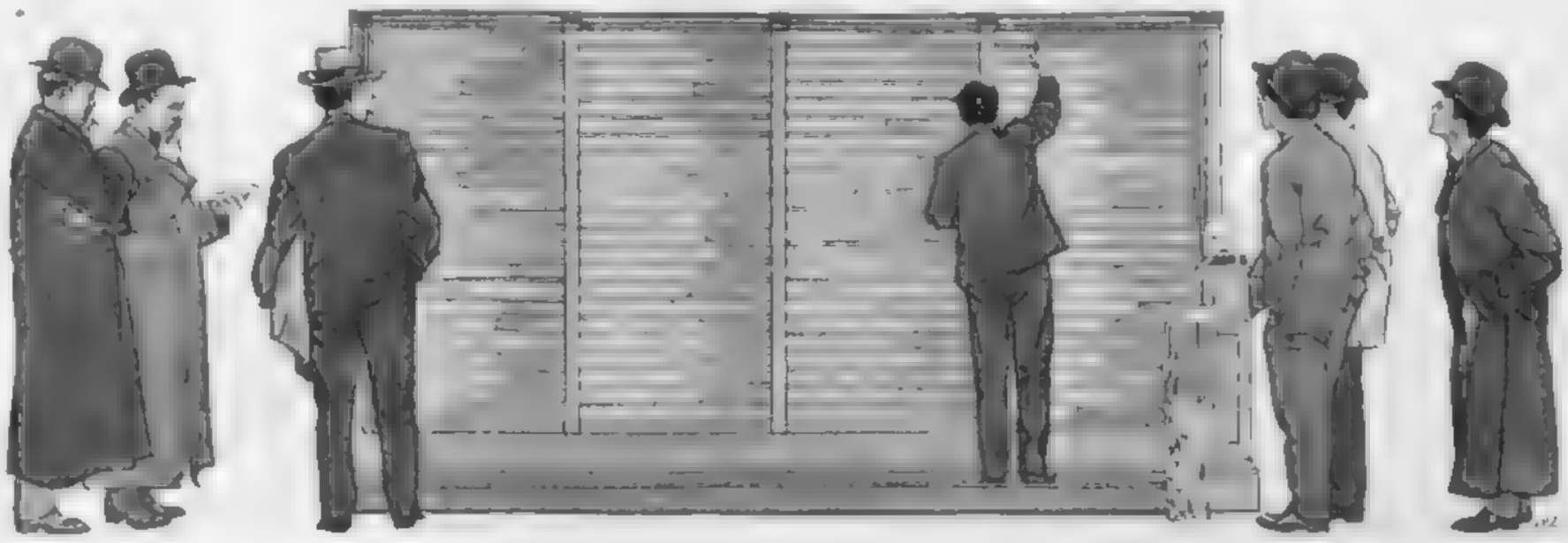
The publication of my first story in the April number of McClure's had roused a great deal of interest in the community where I formerly lived. As later stories were printed in various magazines, that interest spread. Editorials advocating my parole began to appear in the newspapers. I heard of letters urging clemency, which had been sent to the governor by dozens of men and women. But I knew that the executive of the state was not the sort of man to be moved by mere sentiment. I realized that my only chance of receiving a commutation of sentence at his hands was to convince him, myself, that I was worthy of it.

When I made my plans at the jail I had a dual purpose: I resolved to learn how to produce stories that the best magazines would buy, and I was determined to shorten my prison term by making good with my writing. I had accomplished the first object; now I set about securing the second result I sought. My former business partner, who had denied his complicity in the fraud that smashed our company, was arrested soon after I was locked up; but by various tricks of the law he was able to postpone his trial nearly two years. Then he was convicted before the same judge who had sentenced me.

The full hearing in court brought out evidence that tended to mitigate the sternness of the judge toward myself. Both he and the prosecuting attorney wrote letters to the governor, recommending my release from prison on the ground that my sentence was more severe than I should have received had all the facts been known to them when I made my admission of guilt.

These letters warranted me in opening correspondence with the governor. I applied for a commutation of sentence on legal grounds under the state statutes and the parole rules. I supplemented this petition by referring to a public statement I had given to the newspapers after my sentence. I had declared at that time my intention to repay the losses my creditors had suffered. I now reiterated that purpose to the governor. I requested him to grant me an interview the next time he should inspect the penitentiary.

I realized he would be antagonistic to my appeal, for he had stated on several occasions that a man of my education and training was inexcusable if he committed a crime. But I knew, too, that the governor had a big heart. I believed I could win his personal interest and friendliness. Therefore his coldly formal reply to my letter, stating



that he would talk to me when he should visit the prison again, did not discourage me. I wrote to the governor and thanked him for his assurance of an interview. I also improved the opportunity to tell him briefly what I had accomplished with my writing and of the difficulties I had experienced with the unfamiliar tools of my new trade.

As I expected, he responded. His second letter was not so stiff and distant as the first had been. I wrote him a third time and inclosed some commendations I had received from editors. After that our correspondence developed naturally until the executive of the state was fully informed with regard to my life purposes. He came to the penitentiary one day and we had a brief talk face to face. I was careful to limit myself to the business regarding which I had requested the interview. I took no advantage of our letter acquaintanceship. I was certain that he was no longer prejudiced against me, and I felt confident he would now consider more favorably the recommendations of the judge and the prosecuting attorney, to which the warden had attached his indorsement.

After the governor returned to the capital he wrote to me again and asked several questions regarding some details of my case. I furnished the desired information by the next mail.

It was about the middle of December when I received the inquiry from the governor. I felt so hopeful of an early parole that I wrote to my wife and asked her to express me an overcoat. I declared that I expected to be home for Christmas. She sent my old ulster and begged me to tell her the secret she thought I was trying to keep from her. I could only reply that I had no promise of release, but that my intuition convinced me I should be paroled.

Christmas week came. I had received no word from the capital. That year the holiday fell on Friday. When the mails on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings failed to bring me a letter from the state executive I felt dubious about my chances for freedom. But in the afternoon of Wednesday I was summoned to the office of the warden. He greeted me with a broad smile and a hearty handshake.

"I have just received a telephone message from the governor's secretary that you are to go home to-morrow," he informed me. "The parole papers will be here in the morning. You'll have a chance to wear that overcoat of yours after all. Congratulations!"

I took the news almost calmly, though my heart had leaped when the warden stretched out his hand.

"Thanks, Mr. Howell," I responded. "It's fine! I hoped the governor meant to do something for me, and seven months of liberty is just about the best Christmas present I could get." Suddenly I was struck by a coincidence. I cried: "Why, Warden, I'm going home exactly a year after I sold my first story! Two such day-before-Christmases seem almost miraculous, don't they?"

The warden and I had a long talk; then I went back inside the walls to tell the deputy warden and the hallmaster of my parole. That afternoon and evening I packed my belongings and said my good-bys. Next morning I went through the formalities of release, dressed in the summer business suit I had worn to the penitentiary almost three years and a half before, and walked out of the gates to freedom.

I have referred to the coincidence that I first sold a story the day before Christmas and received my parole exactly twelve months later. Another coincidence marked the day of my release. While I was waiting at the railroad station to take my train that Thursday a newsboy came in, calling THE SATURDAY EVENING POST. I bought a copy. When I turned the pages I found the first story I had sold this weekly.

It was my intention to make my new start as a free man in the little city where I had failed, in disgrace. It was not going to be easy to face my former intimates there, but I felt that I should seem cowardly if I did not go back. I expected to meet many cold looks. On the contrary, when I stepped from the interurban car I was greeted only by warm handshakes and the heartiest welcoming cries of "Merry Christmas!" Dozens of my loyal friends spoke to me about the story in THE SATURDAY EVENING POST. There was not a copy of the weekly to be bought in the town that afternoon. The publication of my story coincident with the day of my release made my homecoming from prison almost a triumphal return.

My wife and son did not meet me at the car. They waited in the two simply furnished rooms over a store, where they had lived while I was in the penitentiary. I rushed up the stairs and opened the unfamiliar door. A little woman and an astonishingly big boy ran into my arms. I was home at last!

Nearly two years have passed since my parole. In that time I have met with several misfortunes: A little while after my release I suffered a partial nervous breakdown, but a vacation made me well again. This summer I was attacked by appendicitis and nearly died from blood poisoning; I am only convalescent as I write now. I have been able to work less than fifteen months of the twenty-three that I have been free. Yet my stories have earned all my family's living expenses and, in addition, over twelve hundred dollars paid to doctors and nurses, two thousand more refunded to my creditors, and a little bank balance.

I have not measured up to my literary ambitions—yet; but I know a little more about writing than I did five years and a half ago. My original critic still helps me with all my stories. I am learning all the time how to do better work, and my batting average of sales steadily improves. I have succeeded in the plans I made while I was in jail: I have written stories that the best magazines bought; and I won a commutation of my sentence.

That is looking backward; but my face is turned toward my future. I hope—and believe!—that my books and short stories will enable me to pay every dollar I owe. My name must be one hundred per cent clean—for the sake of my wife and boy who bear it. I'm on the job.

JOY RIDERS

(Continued from Page 19)

"Surprising!" he said unconsciously aloud, speaking generally of the girl with her Russian book; of this article actually in print before him; of himself, Cobbett Gannon, a reporter, wanting obscurely to write a novel.

It was miraculous; and in the silent contemplation of it all a sudden gladness shone in his eyes, as if in answer to an unexpected benign aspect of fate, that had appeared so wholly callous.

The girl rose, with the book under her left arm; and he saw that she wore an engagement ring—a deep, beautiful emerald. She had come so naturally into his consciousness, she left with such an easy nod, that she had vanished before he realized it. He even read his printed and clipped writing once more. But imperceptibly she mingled among his thoughts.

She was not good-looking, with the exception of her eyes, gray and magnetic and searching; her underlip was arrogant, almost ugly, and he had been conscious of a vague dissatisfaction permeating her entire being. She could be disdainful; at the same time, he had seen the reverse of this—an unusual sympathy. But he responded most to the memory of her praise of his work; she had said the one right thing. Her words had heightened his enthusiasm; they had filled him with a sudden energy of desire to accomplish more. It was as if she had lit the taper of his mind, filling him with new light and power.

At seven o'clock, when he went to the paper, he passed through a city of unsubstantial realities, intent on the unreal actualities in his brain. He could hardly wait to reach the rough table, which was his desk, to commence another "story."

XVI

THE floor of the Daily Strand Building on which he worked had been divided by wooden screens into a number of editorial and other offices. Cobbett occupied a small rectangle, with some gay and faded lithographs on the partition walls, durable and battered pine furniture, and a battered and durable typewriter, obsolete in model. At his hand the metal mouthpiece of a tube, disappearing below, afforded communication with the composing and press rooms. He had an amount of routine work to discharge—the column of late arrivals, a notice for the Pier; and through this his mind strayed persistently to the curious chance that had led him to declare, that afternoon, that he would like to write a novel.

The idea had never occurred to him before the impulse had given the desire words. Hardly more than a month before, the thought of writing of any kind had not entered his horizon. Then, following the painful ignominy of his desertion of the beach and Flint's death, the threatened investigation of his property, easily defeated by Roscoe Madlon, and a difficult interview, in which the latter had been indifferent and then contemptuous, he had obtained through Mr. Tamm a tentative position on the local paper.

There, he realized, with a deep satisfaction, he had been successful from the first assignment. He discovered a picturesque quality in words and, within himself, a burning interest in their arrangement into significant sentences. He was largely familiar with the people among whom he went in search of news; he understood the impulses, the causes, hidden behind their faulty or cunning speech; and, in a manner that he could never comprehend, he could put his understanding into print. It was enormously difficult, but in the end he accomplished his purpose. Instinctively, by himself, he found out the necessary limitations, the emphasis and power of suggestion, of writing.

He had been at this scarcely a month when he had said he wished to write a novel. Now, since that extraordinary pronouncement, he realized that the desire ruled his existence. It had been due to the girl with the Russian book; she had communicated to him a fresh and stirring enthusiasm. He had vaguely thought of literary women as spectacled and dried precisions; but here was one young and highly fashionable, alluring. If he never saw her again, still, in a few minutes, she had filled him with a renewed sense of power and desire. He marveled at the magnetic quality she possessed.

The familiar footfalls of the editor crossed the floor without and stopped at his door. Cobbett saw that the other held a newspaper, and already he instinctively knew from the form of the sheet that it was a great, conservative New York daily.

"This will please you, Gannon," the editor said, indicating a column.

Cobbett took the paper and saw that his bit in the Strand had been copied outright and credited to their local daily. A deep, warm flush suffused his face.

"Give us some more," the elder continued. "Take time to-morrow to put the stuff together. If it holds up we'll let you sign it. We believe in that here. . . . Good enough!"

A greater content than Cobbett Gannon had ever before known enveloped him. He sat for a long time motionless over his typewriter, lost in inchoate peaceful being, until a fretful whistle at the tube brought him back to surrounding actualities. He wished he could tell the girl who had found his work good about the New York paper. She, he knew, more than any other in the world, would appreciate what it meant; would greet it with the right spirit.

He would make his novel out of such things as had formed the fragment. It would be real—real people would talk in real periods amid real colors, bulks, spaces. Cobbett was repeating this silently on an evening following, when he made his way into a select hotel situated outside the main activity of the City by the Sea. It was nearly nine o'clock, and yet people were still leisurely moving from the dining room. The wide space about the desk, partitioned by slender wood pillars and fretting, was occupied by women in suave evening dress and solid-looking men smoking. At the desk he bent over the register book, searching for new, significant names, when a familiar, eager voice struck upon his memory. He turned and saw the girl he had encountered on the Pier, conversing with her back toward him. She wore a black dinner dress, and a great deal of her back and her gleaming shoulders were exposed.

"Who is that?" he instantly demanded of a house clerk, a big, optimistic Georgian, who, following Cobbett's indication, replied:

"Miss Balis." He ran a finger over the written names before them. "There she is, with Mr. and Mrs. Neal Fowler—they're related—and Miss Robinet."

Her name, Miss Judith Balis, was scrawled hurriedly beneath the angular signature of Miss Robinet. The other would, of course, write like that—impetuously and with a large disregard for mere neatness. Suddenly he wanted tremendously to talk with her—or, rather, to hear her quick, sympathetic tones. But he couldn't go up to her now; it would be a sheer impertinence, a mistake that she was fully capable of treating as such. He recalled, mingled with her other qualities, the faint but unmistakable arrogance of her bearing. She might be kind, but she could easily be the reverse.

He transferred their names to his small, yellow pad and lingered at the desk, glancing in her direction. The clerk engaged his attention then with a humorous episode of a misplaced knitting needle, and when he looked again she had gone. A surprising sense of personal loss descended upon him; a whelming impulse seized him to follow her, not again to lose sight of her small, deluded person. This, he told himself, was sheer nonsense. But a need of her had been born in him that persisted like a thorn prick. He must tell her about the New York paper; explain what he hoped to do with a novel—the novel she had inspired by mere passing.

He walked reluctantly away from the desk, passing the easy group she had left, and went out upon a porch that faced the sea. It was warm, and many of the chairs were occupied; but in the semigloom he could not be sure of the identity of those about him. The hotel lay with two wings reaching toward the strand, and he made his way over the long veranda, half lingering beside every promise of black.

He had reached the end of his hope when she passed him. As she passed he instinctively raised his hand; but he thought, continuing rigidly on his way, she had not ——

"Oh, hello!" she exclaimed, turning. "I have finished that book. Would you like to read it? I'll get it if you would."

Hat in hand, he stood facing her on the veranda, open above them to the glimmer of the stars. Already he was conscious of the tingling impact of her being, of her communicable glow. She filled him with an overpowering eagerness to talk—to talk to her forever. She charged him with a pressure of energy, as if he had been a receptive cell and her enthusiasm a dynamo.

"Of course," he told her.

"Wait!" she said, and was gone.

He had the illusion that he could still see her, and stayed motionless until she actually returned with the book. He thanked her with a commonplace period and fell into a pit of silence. She moved to the rail, where she leaned lightly, an indistinct shape, with the turn of her bare shoulder sharp against the aura of the rising moon. Well—he wanted to talk to her; here she was.

He told her laboriously about the New York paper copying his half column.

"Splendid!" she assured him. "I am certain that will be the gate to fine things. I did like it so much. How wonderful it will be for you!"

Already his future was assured, his triumph accomplished. Her voice banished all doubt, question. He began to tell her of the plans for his novel, and together they wove his ephemeral threads of fiction into an impressive pattern of beauty. She moved to the hooded shadow of a bath chair, from which she leaned forward with clasped hands and eyes uplifted to him on the rail. The moon rose and filled the wicker-closed space about her with a pale radiance that made her the only reality in a world of nebulous gloom. He was amazed at the fertility of his ideas, the manner in which they arranged themselves, grew coherent, significant. His voice took on a new assurance, almost authoritative.

In the midst of this he saw the moonlight pass in a green flicker through the emerald of her engagement ring. And, as if that had reached her through the sudden contraction of his heart, she said:

"You must have dinner with us; or, if that would be stupid, come for a later party. I want you to talk about your work with a friend of mine who is a well-known writer. He could help you enormously." She hesitated a moment. "I am going to marry Richard Quander," she added.

His first feeling was that this meeting with such a successful novelist as Richard Quander was a part of the extraordinary good luck which had lately befallen him. It was an opportunity any beginner in writing would thankfully welcome—Quander, certainly one of the few universally popular American authors, a man whose word, whose assistance, could move away the most formidable barriers to a coveted hearing. But this was rapidly followed by the surprising conviction that he had little to gain from Richard Quander. His curiosity about the other as a writer was tempered by the knowledge that he was going to marry Judith Balis. He passed into a formless heaviness of being, an illogical resentment of the other man's possessing so much.

"He will be here Saturday," the girl continued. "If you come after dinner there will be a party; you can talk to him. I am staying with Charlotte Fowler and Neal. Cicely Robinet is here too. I wonder whether you'll like her! Men do. I don't know your name. I'm Judith Balis."

He showed her the latter written on his yellow pad; told her his own. She consulted a minute gold dial on her wrist and rose, dismayed.

"We were going out at nine," she explained. "They will be dreadfully cross; but, then, I'm always last—they must be used to me now."

"On Saturday night," he assented. Then: "It's Wednesday now."

"Perhaps I'll be on the Pier to-morrow afternoon late. There's so much of nothing to be got through with."

Her voice bore the discontent he had first seen on her countenance. An emotional response stirred within him—or, rather, the memory of an emotion. He recognized in her tone something of the old darkness of dejection, the inchoate sense of loss, which had followed him from point to point in his progress through life. He could see her more clearly—her lip drooped sullenly; she had changed, hardened. She was now wholly the person of her environment, of her dress. He thought that she regarded him indifferently, as if she was surprised at her indiscretion. Insolence inclosed her like an armor.

Instinctively he retreated mentally, in bearing. He echoed her flat, formal good night and turned away with a stinging sense of having been ignominiously dismissed. He debated whether or not he should go back to her and the meeting with Richard Quander.

She might well express no more than surprise at his inopportune appearance. He decided to let this depend on to-morrow. If she came to the Pier it would mean that he was not unwelcome.

He began to worry about the possibility of her not coming. She was erratic, moody. He wondered about her power of filling him with self-confidence, arrogant dreams. She was the most potent, the most valuable influence that had ever come into his living. If he could have kept her in it there was nothing he might not do. Richard Quander had her. He recalled her fretful complaint—"There's so much of nothing"—her patent discontent. Cobbett didn't understand these in a girl engaged to such a big man as Quander—a girl with so much. She had irresistibly recalled his own blackest moments, the months when he had been sunk in dreadful impotence and depression.

He stopped, facing the sea, invisible except for the cold glitter of the soaring moon; and, forgetting even Judith Balis, a great tide of thankfulness rushed over him. Miraculously he had been saved. The simple columns of the Daily Strand had been his ladder out of the mire of failure. The sentences that he had put together with so much labor and such love, his brief paragraphs in the great New York daily, had set under him a firm foundation.

He was warmed by a feeling of pride, of personal dignity. He was not worthless; his small achievement had disproved that old charge. Other men, long in the Strand office, had never had anything copied in New York. A curiously mingled humility and sharp joy possessed him; he, Cobbett Gannon, had a place shoulder to shoulder with other good men.

XVII

"IF YOU had something more—a story—to show Richard——" Judith Balis said tentatively. It was the late afternoon of to-morrow; they were seated on the end of the Pier—she had come. She had on a short, black wool sweater over a sheer white waist, a crisp white skirt, and a hat that dipped about her eyes. "Of course you won't have time to do anything before he comes."

Cobbett Gannon considered this thoughtfully. He had, he told her, an idea in the back of his head, and which he might get into shape. There was little, he added to himself, that he might not accomplish with her at his shoulder. Not that he was incapable of standing alone, but she gave an infinitely wider horizon to his hopes and possibilities. He tried to comprehend what exactly Judith Balis accomplished in him, but failed. It was as if, with the combination of her spirit, his being stirred into another activity and force. It was as if, forming the separate parts of a pattern, together he could perceive a symmetrical whole.

He considered the wisdom of telling her this. But it was so personal, and the emerald of her engagement ring sparkled so impressively, that he suppressed the desire. They were, he told himself, together in an abstract region of letters; they were two intellects momentarily in contact. Never elsewhere had a mind been so alluring. Judith Balis possessed a charm deliberately heightened and emphasized by an artifice raised to an art; the patch at the left corner of her mouth was a most engaging trifle; she publicly powdered her nose, and the operation, cynical and delicate, was at the least count pleasing.

Then, as if to confound his image of a mental and immaterial companionship, Judith became personal.

Her mother, she told him, was dead; her father perpetually in a course of European cures; there was a brother in the diplomatic service. . . . The discontent with which he was familiar deepened on her countenance.

"I'm sick of pretty nearly everything," she went on recklessly; "you have no idea what a bore my life has become. You see—nothing to do! I've tried a great many things—a course in political economy; dietetics; any number of languages; even charity. But they weren't real. Only parties were eternal, never stopping; things in glasses; new dances, from Paraguay or Canton, exactly like the old; correct young men; incorrect older ones; suitors with or without.

"Now, you see," she said, looking at him hardily, "I am going to try marriage. It's no good your saying I'm wicked, all wrong. I admit it; it can't be helped. I'm glad it is not someone else's husband. It does happen, you know; and it is dreadfully inconvenient."

He scarcely distinguished her words; he was amazed by the picture her tone called into his mind—a narrow bricked street, with shallow, contiguous porches; a fretful man in shirt sleeves held up by pink elastics; a rebellious, "worthless" youth descending the steps; Judith Balis and himself in circumstances so absolutely different, and yet entirely alike. A sympathetic comprehension of her position added itself to his other feelings centered in her.

"You are not wicked!" he declared stoutly. "And you must never think that you have done nothing——" He stopped abruptly.

"Why not?" she demanded.

"You've done a lot for me," he told her lamely.

She was swinging one knee idly over the other, her gaze lowered to a seductive slipper.

"How?" she insisted.

"Every way!" he replied impetuously. "If you think you were all wrong I was a thousand times worse. I thought I was finished, shot. I got lower than you have any idea of. I made horrible mistakes, mistakes that killed a splendid man, and more. Then I got this place on the paper, and it did for me what I have heard some say religion did for them; the work has been my religion. I thought it all out last night. And you have made it a thousand times better and bigger. You have given me a new world. I can't tell you what I owe you, I don't know myself."

"That's quite nice," she told him in a studied voice.

Coming coolly at the end of his fervor it silenced him awkwardly. She was absolutely unaccountable. She rose and they walked silently back toward her hotel.

The sun had drooped to the horizon and flung a roseate veil over the sea, flattened by a western wind. Before the bathing establishment on the Boardwalk at their destination Judith Balis paused, gazing over the serene tide.

"I should be getting ready for dinner," she pronounced; "but I want to go swimming."

"The place is closed," Cobbett said, surveying the front of the bathhouses covered by a canvas wall.

"I think," she continued deliberately, "that I shall—go swimming. Come on!"

She made her way to the canvas and, holding back the curtain, disappeared. Cobbett Gannon followed her into a dusk of long corridors and multitudinous open doors. Except for them, the place was deserted.

"This is mine," she told him, stopping before one of the small sections. "There, across the way—number seventy-six—you will find Neal Fowler's bathing suit."

She appeared in a surprisingly little while, appropriately garbed, with her bare arms raised, adjusting a rubber cap. The wooden corridor whispered to the soft fall of their feet as they moved toward the steps that led to the sand.

The sea was an undulating expanse of glowing rose, with long, transverse violet shadows, into which they walked, followed by ripples like dyes of pure color. Soon they were swimming side by side, silently. The glow deepened from minute to minute. The shore was an immaterial maroon line; above, the immensity of space flared and faded to a breathless primrose. Cobbett was lost in a happiness as profound as the sea, as the sky; a poignancy of delight sharper than he had thought endurable. Slowly, and still without speech, they turned, swam toward the shore.

It was almost dark in the bathing establishment; he had to look closely to discover the number of the Fowlers' bathhouse. When he saw Judith again she was carrying her hat, and her hair was plastered on her brow.

"It's wet," she announced.

The banality thrilled him as if it had been laden with passion and significance. Together they emerged from behind the secretive canvas screen. Cobbett Gannon carried away a tumultuous brain and heart. It had been nothing; yet it had saturated him with longing and delight.

XVIII

AT THE beginning of the following day, when the Strand had gone to press and the editorial offices were deserted, when darkness and lassitude were most insistent, Cobbett, at his antiquated typewriter, commenced putting together the story to show Richard Quander. He worked steadily until the dawn diluted the flood of electric light; then he switched off the latter and continued in the increasing morning radiance.

The routine work of the following hours he performed mechanically, his mind occupied by the multitudinous problems of his own creation. He again worked through the next night, the faint clanking of the presses below in his hearing; polished, substituted, rewrote at fragmentary hours through the day; dressed when he could; and, hurriedly reading the assembled pages of his manuscript, delaying to punctuate differently an obscure sentence, he arrived at the hotel where Judith Balis was staying shortly before nine. He saw her immediately, in an embroidered white-silk dress, folded like a soft fringed shawl about her slender waist, talking to a tall girl in scarlet.

"Oh, Cicely," Judith said, as she saw him, "this is my other literary suitor."

Cobbett learned that the tall girl was Miss Robinet. She was extremely pale, with shadows under fine eyes, a mouth as scarlet as her dress, and long, unusual hands. She surveyed Cobbett without the slightest simulation of interest, and continued a conversation, unintelligible to him, with Judith Balis.

Two men approached—he wondered if one was Richard Quander; but they were Neal Fowler and a Frank Vaux. The first greeted Cobbett pleasantly; he was a short, heavily built man, with a direct gaze and hand. The other had closely curled light hair, aggressive blue eyes, and thin, contemptuous lips. He nodded perfunctorily, lighting a cigar in a long paper holder. Miss Robinet immediately gravitated to his side and, a hand on his shoulder, whispered laughingly in his ear.

"Here's Richard!" Judith exclaimed.

Cobbett saw a tall, thin man, immaculately dressed, with a large mobile mouth and tired eyes. He was, Cobbett thought, surprisingly young in appearance; there was nothing about him to indicate a writer. Two women accompanied him.

There was a general laughing encounter, in the midst of which Judith performed her short introductions, and plans for the evening were vigorously debated. A café, later, was decided upon. Meantime they sauntered out on the porch and drew chairs into a loose circle.

Cobbett felt isolated, outside the familiar, broad banter. Now it was directed at Cicely Robinet; she answered with frank hardihood, and he learned that, in a constant state of financial depression, she depended largely on chance and cards for the necessary luxuries of her existence. He saw, too, that when Frank Vaux leaned forward over his cigar her shoulder had purposely brushed his. Neal Fowler's wife and her sister, Freda, lounged back, with crossed knees, in their chairs, were starting in their careless directness of speech. They were, however, Cobbett discovered, kindly disposed women, he thought, with hearts. Miss Robinet continued to ignore him absolutely. Frank Vaux blew the smoke of a studied neglect into his face.

Richard Quander's voice was crisp, decided; his entire person radiated confidence and self-satisfaction. Cobbett grew reluctant to show him his story, to speak here of his ambitions. Finally he was reduced to the misery of a hope that Judith Balis would say nothing of their plan to demand Quander's assistance.

However, in a conversational lull, Judith did precisely that.

"Richard," she said, "Mr. Gannon is a writer too; he has been copied in the New York Planet."

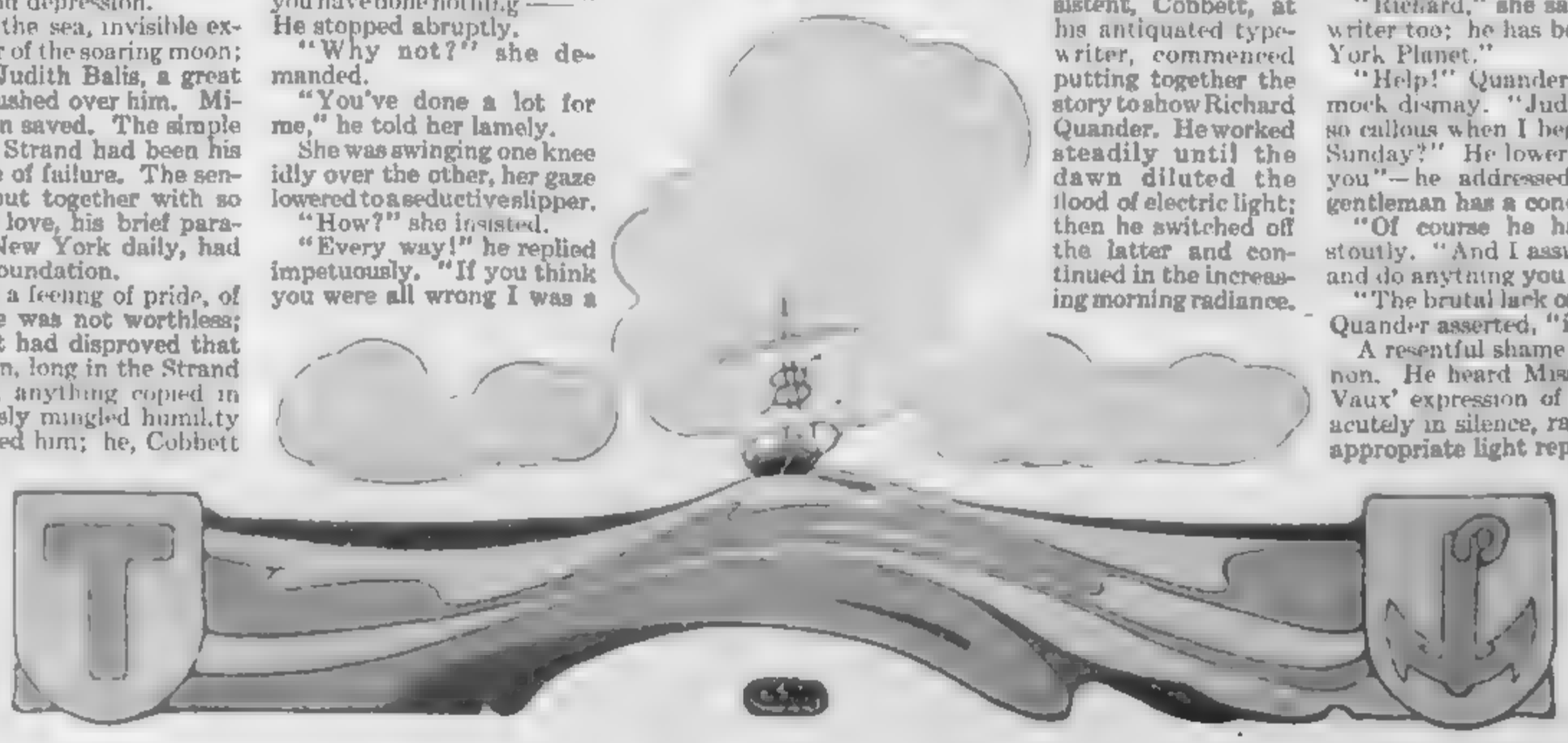
"Help!" Quander cried, in an instant mock dismay. "Judith, how could you be so callous when I begged you for a restful Sunday?" He lowered his voice. "I'll lay you"—he addressed Neal Fowler—"the gentleman has a concealed manuscript."

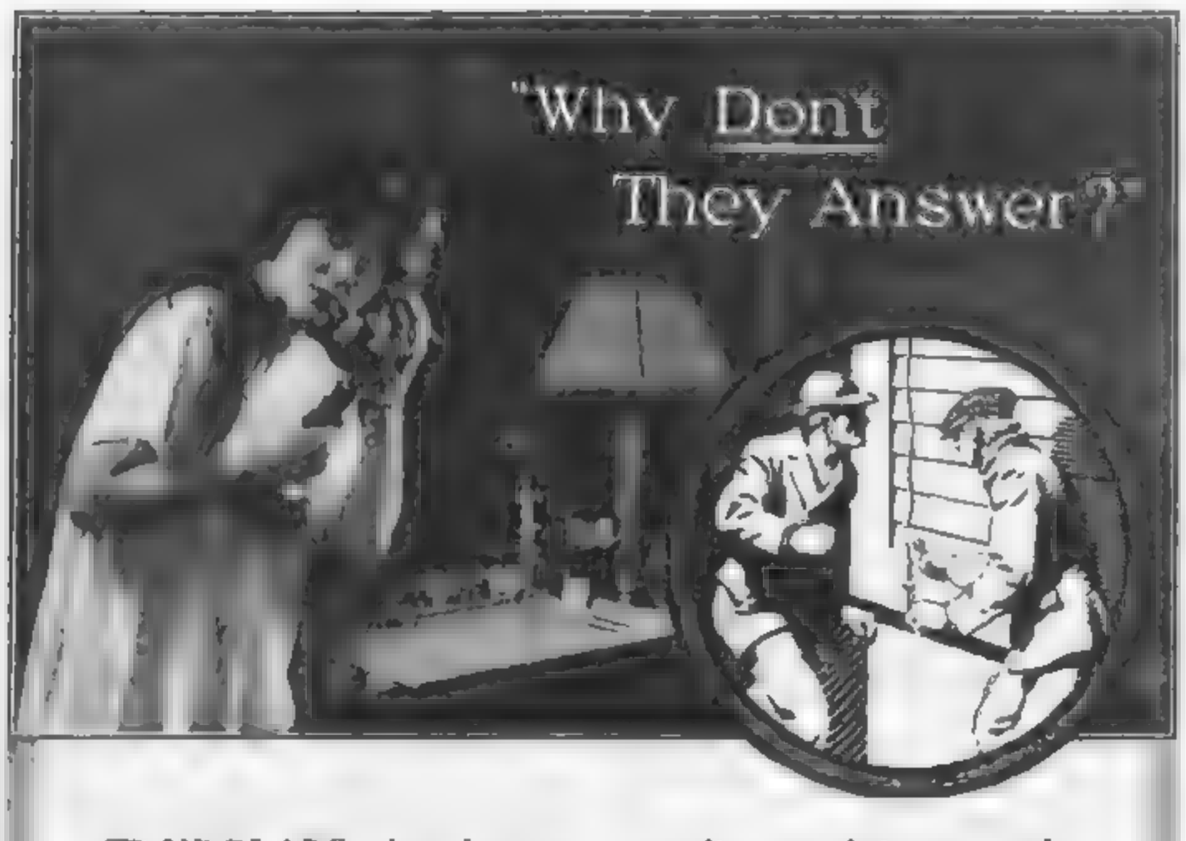
"Of course he has!" Judith declared stoutly. "And I assured him you'd read it and do anything you could."

"The brutal lack of thought in that girl," Quander asserted, "is beyond belief."

A resentful shame flooded Cobbett Gannon. He heard Miss Robinet laugh; saw Vaux' expression of disdain. He suffered acutely in silence, racking his brain for an appropriate light reply, a means of speedy retreat. Quander recommenced, in a singsong voice:

"The editor thanks you, but regrets to say that your esteemed contribution has been found unavailable for present purposes. This is not





BURGLARS play the game according to their own rules. "Booty: jewels and gold—a stealthy sneak-in—a quick get-away"—this is the game the morally starved vampire-burglar plays. He plays the game to *win*. ANYTHING is fair. He laughs at signal circuits and telephone wires—these he cuts in a jiffy. He mocks superior brute strength—one blow from his slungshot drops the huskiest athlete. He bows to but one thing—the fear of a firearm.

The only *sure* way to outwit a burglar is to flash your revolver on him. You are armed! Two million men and women in this country have found the

IVER JOHNSON
SAFETY AUTOMATIC REVOLVER

the perfect answer for the defense of *business and home*. The Iver Johnson is the famous fool-proof revolver. It can be thrown against a brick wall—or dropped on the floor—and it still will not go off. Only one thing under the sun can make it go off—that is a long pull on the trigger. It has unbreakable wire springs that insure a lifetime of dependable service. You can get an Iver Johnson Revolver with Regular, "Perfect" Rubber, or "Western" Walnut Grip.

$6 to $8—at Hardware and Sporting Goods Dealers'

Send for Free 80-Page Book It tells all about Iver Johnson Revolvers. It also tells [illegible] about the Iver Johnson Champion Single Barrel Shotgun ($6), and the Iver Johnson Hammerless Double Barrel Shotgun ($20). And about Iver Johnson Racing, Cushion Frame, Truss Frame Roadster, Motocycle, models of bicycles for "Boy Scouts" and "Camp Fire Girls." Adults' models, $35 to $55. Juveniles' models, $20 to $25.

IVER JOHNSON'S ARMS & CYCLE WORKS, 147 River Street, Fitchburg, Massachusetts
99 Chambers Street, New York **717 Market Street, San Francisco**

MORE MONEY FOR 1917

Beginning with the New Year, you can easily increase your earnings.

Hundreds of men and women have discovered that an odd hour means an extra dollar.

If you have even a little time to spare we will pay for it liberally.

By accepting a position as spare-time subscription representative of THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL and THE COUNTRY GENTLEMAN you can quickly establish a Curtis business that will bring you

AN EXTRA $10.00 EACH WEEK

During 1917 more than a million and a half mail subscriptions will be renewed. Thousands of new subscriptions will be secured.

Let us explain our liberal salary and commission offer. A postcard will bring you complete details if addressed—

Box 709, Agency Division

THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY, Independence Square, Philadelphia

necessarily a criticism, but merely indicates the present needs of our ——"

"Richard," Judith Balis said quietly, "I told Mr. Gannon you would advise him. I think his work is splendid. Take his story, please." She turned to Cobbett with an extended hand; and slowly, reluctantly, he placed the folded sheets in it. "Here, Richard!"

The latter took the manuscript and opened it with a flourish; but, apparently changing his mind, he stuffed it into a pocket.

"I am a very busy man," he said curtly to Cobbett. "You have found, through Miss Balis, the only possible path to what will probably be a wasteful two hours. I employ an efficient person merely to protect me from young hopefuls."

Cobbett's resentment, his suffering, changed to cold dislike. He gazed with narrowed eyes at Richard Quander. The other elevated his brows and lit a cigarette. Cobbett had never read a novel of Quander's, and suddenly he intended to; he had a conviction in that connection. He said to himself passionately: "They can't be worth anything; why, he has no understanding, no humanity! A big man, a good man, would have been all different." He recalled a phrase in the book Judith Balis had given him: "The heart is the important thing, and the rest is all nonsense." He said coolly, in the manner of an equal:

"You mustn't blame Miss Balis. The whole thing's unimportant; give it back to me and save us both trouble."

"Richard will do nothing of the kind!" Charlotte Fowler declared. "If Judith says anything is splendid, it is; and we'll all insist not only on his reading it but making one of those silly editors give you an enormous check."

Cobbett wanted to thank her for this innate goodness. Judith Balis said nothing; her face was devoid of expression now. Cobbett saw, in the gloom, that she was positively ugly. Her expression of discontent had deepened to bitterness.

He decided abruptly not to accompany them to the café; work on the paper offered a ready excuse. He rose, explaining this, and patently awaiting the return of his story. But, instead, Richard Quander nodded sharply.

"You'll hear from me," he said.

Cobbett could gain nothing further. Judith was totally indifferent to his leaving; she made no allusion to seeing him again. He carried away a feeling of intense discomfort, the trivial sting of Frank Vaux's supercilious air.

XIX

HE FOUND a note from Richard Quander on Monday at the Strand office. It was brief, but not discourteous, requesting him to have dinner with him that evening. Cobbett approached the hotel indicated—a low gray L, set on an expanse of clipped lawn—with mingled feelings of curiosity and antagonism. He endeavored to assume an attitude of indifference, and he shook the other's hand with deliberate self-possession. Quander, he saw now, was older than he first appeared; an age not so much an accumulation of years as a depletion of his vitality. There were silver stains in his hair; his motions were abrupt, almost disordered; and his face bore the stamp of continuous mental strain.

Throughout dinner Richard Quander persistently avoided any reference to the subject or accident that had brought them together. He talked pleasantly, in the trivial manner of a commonplace host, until they had moved to a small inclosure of glass, with wicker furniture on a tiled floor, where they had a table by a balustrade and vivid boxed flowers. Quander asked sharply, in a total reversal of the expected:

"Have you read anything of mine?"

"The last," Cobbett replied; he preserved an awkward silence through the visual interrogation that followed.

"You didn't like it," Quander told him; "my pretty little puppets failed to please. I'll explain my work to you in a sentence," he continued incisively. "I belong to the school of writers of the Hotel Vanderbilt Café. We are very successful," he added enigmatically. "We have the best tables, the choicest entrées; the result of the largest incomes that have ever come from books. What do the opinions of the few who praise Meredith or Conrad matter? Our royalties are based on fifty thousand, a hundred thousand, two hundred thousand."

Cobbett Gannon unconsciously rolled a cigarette from cheap tobacco.

"By heaven!" Quander said. "I wish I was still making cigarettes from cut hay! I was young once, too, and made my bow to art." He suddenly produced Cobbett's story. "Of course you must know that this is no good; it can only go in the drawer."

A sharp disappointment contracted Cobbett's being. He tried to tell himself that the opinion of Richard Quander, of one man, was inconclusive; but it was impossible to mistake the other's accent of authority, of knowledge.

"This, as I said," Quander continued, "is nothing in itself. At the same time"—he grew deliberate—"it has some extremely lovely work in it; there are sentences, instinctive angles of treatment, that any man alive might be glad to own. It is the most authentic, the most convincing fragment I have ever seen from a new man. Where," he demanded, "in the name of Chaucer, did you get this comprehension, this sympathetic penetration of life, of the inscrutable maze of human affairs?"

"I like it all," Cobbett Gannon told him, in an overwhelming rush of confidence and aspiration; "none of it seems bad or low, but only full of—of living, of hope, of effort—successful or broken. I was down in it, hated it; but now I can see that every detail of life has its place in the beauty of the mass. I used to sneer at my father, my home, because he was poor and the place smelled of cabbage soup. I used to shrink from my mother's rough red elbows, wish they were smooth and white and in silk; and I missed all that was real, that was fine."

"There's no cabbage soup at the Vanderbilt," Quander interposed. "*Potage à la chou—potage!*" he repeated. "And your stuff will be good, honest soup." He glanced at his watch, rang for a waiter. "I am going over to New York to-night," he explained.

He sat for a little while, with his head sunk on his breast, his tense hands for a moment relaxed. Then he gazed with a peculiar intensity at Cobbett.

"I told this," he said slowly, "about your work, the inevitable future, to Miss Balis."

■

COBBETT GANNON made his way almost blindly, instinctively, to the Pier, striving to pierce to the significance, the purpose, of Quander's last words. Inside there was but a limited number of people; there was nothing apparently to be gathered here, no news, and he turned to go back to the office of his paper. On the dancing floor Mrs. Sibber was revolving in the arms of a youth who recalled Cobbett's own past—now, he thought, lost forever.

His attention was caught by hammering close by, and he saw that a screen had been drawn about a wall from which the sound came. With the instant curiosity of his calling, the ease of a familiar association with the Pier, he pushed aside an end of the screen and entered the inclosed space.

A workman in leather apron, with gloved hands, was bending above a matted cable of covered wires. At the sound of Cobbett's presence he shot out, without turning:

"This patching will only do for a matter of days. I warned you, Stokes—the whole place will have to be rewired. The insulation's rotten. She'll go up as sure as" He turned and saw Cobbett Gannon. "Did you see that screen?" he exploded.

Cobbett's trained perception saw, too, that the woodwork by the cable of wires had been scorched and blackened. He backed out from the shut space, suddenly possessed by a realization of the importance of his discovery. He knew that if the wooden superstructure of the Pier caught fire it would burn to the water. Any way of escape for those on its length would be imperiled, if not destroyed.

A sense of the responsibility of his profession mingled with the knowledge that his editor, enlisted in a campaign of public safety, would gladly score such negligence. He went immediately in search of Stokes, the director of the Pier. The latter was in his office, closed from the body of the structure, and he turned an impatient attention on Cobbett. He was an incredibly thin man, with bluish temples, a beady gaze, and a long, smooth, drooping jaw.

"I fell on some information I thought I'd bring to you before taking it on to the Strand," Cobbett proceeded. "The wiring on this Pier is rotten. It's dangerous! I've seen where it has already burned the wood. The place will have to be completely rewired to protect it from fire. . . . We want to know what you intend to do?"

The other's gaze narrowed to a mere pin-like vision and his jaw closed with a snap.

He was silent for a long breath, and then issued a complete and sharp denial of Cobbett Gannon's statement.

"What do you intend to do?" the latter reiterated, unmoved. "We've got it on you! If you will make an immediate new installation we can work together. If you won't ——"

"How can I tell you in a brace of minutes?" Stokes exploded irritably. "This is news to me. I'll have to see the chief electrician; have estimates made."

"This is no time for estimates," Cobbett interrupted. "What would you do with the people on the Pier now if she took fire at the entrance?"

Stokes lapsed into another silence, out of which he shrewdly studied the figure before him. Finally:

"I get you," he pronounced; "and you are right. The people must be safeguarded. But I can't answer you, personally, at once. I must look the thing over; telegraph for instructions. Don't crowd us on this, Gannon. Remember, we carry a big advertising account with the Strand. We're a good customer. Come back to-morrow evening and you can see the whole situation before you go to press."

What, Cobbett wondered, did Richard Quander mean by his last allusion to Judith Balis? This and Stokes, the Pier's wiring, struggled together in his mind.

"That's reasonable, ain't it?" the other demanded.

Cobbett was forced to acknowledge that it was. It would be irrational to deny Stokes' request; besides, if he was premature it might involve him in serious difficulty with the financial policy of the paper. To-morrow he would have full details, a secure position. . . . What had Quander meant? He said suddenly:

"I'll go to the paper at eleven—evening; and I must absolutely have it all by then."

XXI

THE Pier, Cobbett Gannon thought, was inexplicably woven into the texture of his affairs. When, on the following afternoon, he decided that he must see Judith without delay, he went first to the structure sweeping out into the actual body of the sea. There was not a stir of air or water—only perhaps a whisper at the unbroken edge of the tide; the sky was the pollen blue of a flower. If he did not see Judith Balis there he could find her at the hotel. Stokes' head was silhouetted against the glass frame of his office. He moved as Cobbett passed, but the latter passed directly on. He continued to the bench where he had first seen Judith. . . . It was empty; there were scarcely any people on the Pier. He would wait, he decided, for an hour; and then ——

Cobbett turned; and, seeing Judith Balis approaching, he rose.

She was dressed in the extreme of an artificial mode—from a broad white hat an opaque brown veil was draped across the lower part of her face; white buckskin gloves were deeply folded at her wrists; and she carried a slender black stick with a silver-checked head. She nodded almost morosely, and then sank on the bench.

Judith said nothing for a minute or more, but sat looking out over the serene expanse of sea; then with an impatient movement she loosened her veil—it fell softly about her throat—and stripped off her gloves.

He saw at once that the emerald ring had gone. With a sudden pounding in his veins he now understood Richard Quander's final period, the other's measure of magnanimity. He wondered inchoately what it would mean for him! Could it be that he had a miraculous chance? He realized that he wanted Judith Balis with every nerve, every hope; in all his dreams. Cobbett said stupidly:

"You have broken your engagement."

"But not because I loved you," she replied with amazing directness. "It got impossible, like the rest."

"I'm not sure that I know what love means," he said beside her. "Like all those words, it has got so battered, so misused, that it can't well be made out. It has been cheapened, too, by counterfeits. But you must know what you have been to me, what you could be, how much I need you. You are a part of all that is good in me, a part of all that may succeed. Without you, what is possible that Richard Quander has told you would have been impossible. In a way you have made me; not because you tried—that would have been only charity—but because you were you and I was what I am. It was all instinctive, mysterious, out of our hands. We have a great thing in common. Judith, will you stay with me?"

"It wouldn't last," she told him. "In a year—perhaps sooner—I'd get tired, just as I've got tired of all the rest. You don't know me, or the life and blood that have made me. I hate my life! It's dreary beyond words; but, after all, it is me. I couldn't live any other. Thrills and parties, change and dress! I hate this; but I'd detest keeping your house, all the small duties and pleasures of regularity. I told you something was wrong with me—a little black speck in my heart. Oh, I'm all wrong! I haven't a trace of what you'd call morality ——"

"I don't care what you are," he interrupted; "I don't care if I never have a home—if you only stay with me three months. I would rather be married to you for a little, I'd rather stand talking to you in the rain, than have years of greatness with anyone else. I don't know why; I don't care. When I thought you were going to marry Richard Quander this was like a vision, a silver mirage; wonderful, but without reality. Since there has been the faintest chance for me, in the last fifteen minutes, the thought of having you in my life has killed every other wish."

"Cobbett," she said, turning toward him a disturbed, potent face, in a trivial, fashionable frame, "I am afraid I'd ruin you—spiritually. It was different with Richard. Did you know that he had been married before, divorced by his wife? He knew me; he has been a part of the life I represent; neither of us had anything to lose. You are different; Richard thinks you may go as far as anyone writing. I am sure of it. You will demand, require, a great deal. And I have no confidence in myself; I can't believe that I am the slightest bit good. I could marry you; I'd like to, but I won't. It might only be another thrill; in the end do you immeasurable harm."

"I can't help that," he told her doggedly, "and I don't believe you."

Suddenly he realized that here, at the beginning of his life, at his first petty victory, he had come upon his greatest adventure: he knew that he should never again approach the significance and beauty that Judith Balis held for him. After this, if he missed her, whatever he might accomplish would be shadowed by regret, partial.

"I am afraid," she said. "I thought these idiotic clothes would show you a little of what I have tried to explain."

"I like them," Cobbett replied with an unexpected vigor; "they amuse me like a game played as a relief from serious or stolid things. You are like a lovely and gay masquerade. It is a better courage, really, than that of the deadly earnest. Judith, I can't really live without you."

"I am afraid," she said again. "I want to—awfully. Sometimes I almost think that you have given me a new spirit. But the risk would be frightful. No! No! No!" She swiftly redraped the veil about her face and took up her crumpled gloves and stick. "I'm not nice," she told him, rising. "In the end you will see that I was right."

"Do you mean that this is the end, now?" he demanded bitterly.

"Who can tell?" she replied. "We are leaving to-morrow. . . . To-night, dinner with Frank Vaux. Cicely Robinet has placed herself at last, and with tremendous advantage. Good-by! Perhaps you'll dedicate a book to me; I'd like that."

"Where do you live?" he asked miserably.

"Look in the silliest paragraph of the silliest weekly in existence," she answered, her lips making a faint movement on the brown veil.

"Wait, Judith!" he protested desperately. "I—I—there must be some way ——"

But she left him abruptly, crossing the Pier, out of his vision.

XXII

THE sea had never been more beautiful—a serene expanse like a slightly undulating, tenderly blue veil, powdered with gold at the indefinite horizon. Judith Balis had gone, and all that he had accomplished; the future, like the aureate distance, was enveloped in a sooty darkness, blotting out one by one all his objects of attainment and desire. He repeated that she was unique, never to be found again; yes, at the commencement of his life he had grasped at what must be its supreme flower—grasped and failed, fallen short.

He was unconscious of the dissolving color about him, the harmony of approaching evening. He sat without stirring on the

Perhaps Your Truck Service Needs Motz Cushion Tires

Greater speed, quicker deliveries and so more work in a day—

Slower depreciation of truck mechanism—

Less jar on driver and on goods carried—

These are the main reasons for the phenomenal increase in the use of Motz Cushion Tires—an increase of 189 per cent in the last year.

Pneumatic tires have their place in the commercial field—where very high speeds are necessary.

And solid tires have their place.

But between the two there is an *intermediate* field—medium loads and speeds up to 25 miles per hour—which has been won to the Motz Tire, by force of superlative quality and performance.

Perhaps *your* hauling would be more efficient and cheaper if your trucks were Motz-equipped.

It's an important question, which your Goodyear Motz Service Station can answer with authority.

The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.
Akron, Ohio

GOODYEAR
AKRON

We Pay this Young Man $100.00 a Week

HE is J. J. Neal, of Virginia, a student of medicine. During the past two months we paid him $850.00 for looking after new and renewal subscriptions for *The Saturday Evening Post*, *The Ladies' Home Journal* and *The Country Gentleman*.

If you have some spare time, you can convert it into money just as Mr. Neal and a host of others are doing. Thousands of men and women with only occasional leisure hours are each earning from $2.00 to $40.00 a week. Others, who can give us all their time, earn correspondingly more.

During 1917 there are hundreds of thousands of renewals to be forwarded. If you want to increase your 1917 earnings, drop us a line at once. Your profits will begin with the New Year.

We will provide everything required and give you the necessary instruction. Address Box 706, Agency Division, The Curtis Publishing Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Dromedary Dates

Eat Dromedary Dates daily—as a food, a dainty, a confection. These are the finest fruit of the Arabian palms, brought to you in individual, dust-proof packages.

THE HILLS BROTHERS COMPANY
Dept. K, 375 Washington Street, New York

CHRISTMAS time is made doubly delightful when Santa brings plenty of Necco Lemon Drops, Fruit Drops, Hoarhound Drops, Sweethearts, Boston Baked Beans, Necco and Hub Wafers. Always fresh and delicious.

Look for the Necco Seal. It's the safe and sane way to choose sweets for your children.

NEW ENGLAND CONFECTIONERY COMPANY
Boston, Mass.

Miss Lillian Blood Miss Olympia Robbeth Miss Margaret Cuy

Spare Time Money-Makers

NOWADAYS most young women like to earn money of their own. They find a sound satisfaction in demonstrating that they could earn their own living if it were necessary.

Of the three young ladies pictured above, one pays all her personal expenses, another is paying the cost of her education, the third is saving to buy herself an automobile. All of them would tell you that they take genuine pleasure in their spare time work as local representatives of The Curtis Publishing Company. Even more, they enjoy their easy profits, which vary from

$10.00 to $100.00 a month

Wouldn't you like to know more about the work which these young women find so pleasant and profitable? No experience is necessary. With your own knowledge of *The Saturday Evening Post*, *The Ladies' Home Journal* and *The Country Gentleman* you are certain of success. A post-card inquiry will enable us to help you get started at once

Agency Division, Box 707

The Curtis Publishing Company, Independence Square, Philadelphia

bench where Judith had left him, disorganized and offering no resistance to the dark tide flowing through him like a subtle venom.

Then his aimless gaze was caught by what seemed to be a flaring poppy floating through the air. Another followed—a flight of glowing petals. One settled by his foot and immediately turned black. He was conscious of a vague disturbance, the sense of an unusual sound; and, rising, he saw a bank of smoke rise sudden and solid from the land end of the Pier.

He hastened, ran mechanically in, and found that an insuperable wall of heat barred him from the exit. Only a few people were on the Pier with himself. A coppery glow spread out over the structure, in which some gesticulating figures resembled twisting, reddish smoke. Far below the Pier the incoming tide noiselessly embraced the iron uprights. The evening was a heavenly and faint stain of color. The volume of smoke constantly increased; a black curtain, gorgeous with showering sparks, hung between Cobbett Gannon and safety. He saw a quickly congesting crowd on the Boardwalk, a darker human flood on the sand.

Well, what he had predicted—warned Stokes—had happened. Cobbett had no doubt of his ability to escape. Already he saw a familiar figure making a way out to where the water was deep beneath the Pier.

"It's time to leave, Cobbett!" Dupner told him in his high, thin utterance.

The latter, stopping by the rail, commenced methodically to remove his clothes. Cobbett waited to make sure that escape had been closed at the entrance. The deeper roar of the fire was now supplemented by the dull drumming of engines from the shore, and slender arches of far-flung water glittered like arcs of diamonds. Advancing flames, orange and violet, clothed the walls of the dancing pavilion. It was, as Dupner had said, time to go! Cobbett had often, swimming, circled the Pier.

A sudden small panic touched him, and he moved more quickly to where he could dive advantageously to safety. He had thrown aside his coat when a thin hand convulsively gripped his shoulder. With an unreasonable sinking of his heart he turned and saw Mrs. Sibber.

"Oh, Mr. Gannon!" she gasped. "I was with a—a party, and he's left me!"

She wore a hat gay with flowers, beneath which her face seemed doubly haggard with age and horror. A violent hate for her flared through him. She continued to clutch, to drag at him in a hysteria of imploring.

"You won't leave me, Mr. Gannon!" she asseverated again and again.

He realized in an accession of actual, cold fear that now he could not leave her. His sense of security abruptly deserting him, left him staring at the oncoming wall of lurid and flaming smoke.

A towering electric sign on the Boardwalk automatically flashed into the rippling advertisement of a favorite cigarette—far away. Mrs. Sibber's copious tears had smeared her face with paint and powder and soot. She was hideous beyond anything he had ever conceived—a dreadful menace, with lead-colored lips.

"You won't leave me!"

He couldn't. His panic increased and he realized that it threatened what chance of ultimate safety they might have. He should have to act promptly. . . . Cobbett dragged Mrs. Sibber to the edge of the Pier.

"Down there," he told her—"the ironwork makes a ladder. . . . Easy! Must try it at once!"

She screamed faintly, clutching the outer rail. He threatened desperately to go without her. The roof of the dancing space fell in, with a thunderous uprush of fire, and, before he realized it, Mrs. Sibber was scrambling down toward the water. It was not a difficult descent, and in a few moments he was at her side on an iron crosspiece, only a foot above the smooth tide.

A despairing courage possessed the woman. She nodded when he showed her how he could best swim with her, and her rent finery floated away on the surface of the water.

"Now!" Cobbett Gannon said; and he slid out, with her weight dragging at his shoulder.

He could see, by the apparent slow movement of the concrete piling, that he was making progress, but he had intended to keep farther out from the Pier. He changed, in a bright gust of anger, the direction of his course. In a short space his arm grazed the rough surface of a support. He turned from the structure at a sharper angle still, in a sudden flurry of energy. This, he knew, was perilous, the shore was still two hundred yards distant. He wondered why no boats appeared to pick them up.

He swam with a slower, steady stroke, and almost immediately his foot struck against an unyielding upright bulk.

In momentary dismay he drifted, with his burden, beneath the Pier. Above he could see long, glowing streaks, where the fire showed between the twisting boards of the flooring. A great, flaming plank shot down, hissing, into the water.

He was being drawn under the Pier by the eddies that sucked continually about the piling. Encumbered by Mrs. Sibber, he was unable to overcome their force and gain the open tide beyond. He gathered all his power to escape from the menace above, the falling débris. His arm swept in a smooth arc; his legs drove against the water. He could, at the cost of ceaseless struggle, keep just at the overhanging edge of the conflagration. Alone, by this time he could have been easily beyond, free, safe.

His hatred for Mrs. Sibber became a demoniacal obsession. An insidious temptation crept through him to break her hold upon his shoulder and escape. No one in that maelstrom of black death and flame would know—would ever question. He saw her face, a greenish-white blot, plastered with soggy hair, and the urgent voice within him whispered that she had already died of fright; that there was nothing left to save; that he was supporting a lifeless weight. The fixed hands that held it to him were blue. Yet something more brutally insistent than all his longing and dread made it impossible for him to release himself, to progress alone.

He saw the strung lights of the Boardwalk, bright and infinitely desirable; and then he was irresistibly drawn back beneath the Pier. Streaks of crimson flame showered like comets all about him, extinguished in the strangling depths.

He suddenly thought, with surprising lucidity, that he was but twenty-three years old; life was just commencing; yet now, at any minute, he must die, crushed into nothingness! He could escape by himself, without that damned leaden thing hanging on him!

His thoughts changed—Mrs. Sibber was the past, the past that he had supposed to be left forever behind, but which he could not lose. All the weight of his hideous mistakes, his last blunder, were still eternally suspended about his neck. He saw Plint, with the rag on his foot, struggling heroically and in vain; Mae Lanty, dull and robbed of her youth. He, too, continued to struggle, to swim; but without avail. A blistering heat enveloped him from above; the roar of flames mingled with the far, vibrant drumming. This was all, he thought; and he was seized by a piercing regret for what might have been the future, a pervading, weary sorrow.

A sharp rending sounded directly above him, and instinctively he sank, with his load, diving forward. But, before he could escape, a scalding red blur, a shrill uproar, surrounded him. It passed; but Cobbett Gannon survived, stripped of his burden. He struggled, half dazed, in a nightmare of effort. . . .

The unbroken canopy of evening drooped tenderly above him; close at hand he heard the faint slapping of water on the beach. He walked ponderously through the shallows to the upper sand and a silent, intent multitude. Their features swam in the gloom; their warmth and vitality infolded him like a garment.

He turned irresolutely, swayed in another direction—when he saw, standing out from the mass, a familiar, contained countenance. It was Frank Vaux; at his shoulder stood Cicely Robinet, in crimson, and Fowler.

He felt that Judith Balis was there before he saw her; and, before he realized her movement, her intention, she had walked deliberately to him, putting her arms about him with a total disregard of the murmurs of the curious and immaterial throng.

(THE END)

MRS. NEMESIS

(Continued from Page 11)

O'Hara reached for the doorknob by way of finality. Brand turned to the girl:

"That means we'll have to wait for supper until we get to Tate's."

"Mr. O'Hara," said Clara softly, "we've walked all the way from Byrne with our grips. Drive us over to Tate's—I'll pay you well."

"I couldn't nohow. My horses been working in the field all this hot day. I wouldn't hitch up now and drive five feet. Not for nobody!"

Clara turned away, but not before Brand saw. She was merely very tired and the tears were very near the surface.

"How much do you want for your team, sight unseen?"

"Ain't for sale."

"Two hundred and fifty?"

"Ain't for sale."

"Three hundred?"

"Stranger, I ain't for sale; and my mush nin't for sale; and my team ain't for sale!"

"I'm not hungry—really!" said Clara.

"All right! Show us the road to Tate's!"

"Ain't no road. Tate's is five mile due south. Follow the fences for two mile; then keep on. After a while you'll see a grove of trees. Tate's is through the trees. A house with a sign on."

"We'll have to walk it." Brand's voice was grave. "I'll help you all I can. He leaves us no choice."

"We'll walk it together, Mr. Sand Man."

The next moment Jimmy, standing inside his slammed door, was trying to shift his bachelor cowardice to their shoulders.

"He called her Miss! Not married! Sure I won't ask them into my house! Funny thing, traveling together and not married!"

That walk to Tate's will be remembered by Brand and Clara during their lives. As the stonelike Irishman closed the door in their faces Brand made an angry movement forward, as though he would seize by force what was denied them by courtesy. But Clara laid her hand on his arm.

"Nothing would be gained," she said.

They had come from Byrne by road. They now had to travel by compass across country, laying their course by the fences, which followed the section lines. Fortunately the light was growing better; otherwise they could not have climbed their first sand hill without falling many times.

"We'll take a sight on a star and then we'll not have to watch fences so closely."

This they did; and after that they were able to save themselves by passing round the worst of the sand, instead of over it with the fence. Nevertheless, the going was very heavy. In the small valleys between the hills the bluejoint was dense and high, impeding their progress. Grama grass, wild parsnips, shoestrings and tarweeds tripped them on the slopes; or, if not these, bunchgrass in great warts and welts. The tops of the hills were wind-eaten—hollowed out like craters. These craters, or blow-outs, were sometimes raw and sometimes partly grassed over, but, whether one or the other, were always difficult to pass. Cross-country travel in the Sand Hills is never of the easiest.

"How are you standing it?"

"How are you, Mr. Sand Man? I don't have so much of myself to stand as you."

He could see that she was very tired, however, and began taking it easier. After that they rested frequently—sometimes twice or three times while making the ascent of a single hill. Once, while descending a slope through some bunch grass, Clara made a misstep into the midst of a family of sand burs.

"Oh!" she cried, holding her skirts back from her ankles.

Brand, turning, saw her dismay.

"Sit down on the suitcase," he ordered, placing it for her. "Just sit still. I'll get them off without making matters worse. The spines are poisonous to some people."

She seated herself while he kneeled and began carefully plucking out the burs from round her shoetops. And if there was any irony in the fact that the timidest man in the state was kneeling before the primmest pretty girl in the Sand Hills, plucking sand burs from her slender ankles by the light of the moon, neither was aware of it. Brand, whose fingers tingled at the merest touch of her shoe leather, removed with delicacy and deftness what burs there were.

"There," he said. "I believe I have all of them. Better make sure."

Clara leaned over and ran her fingers round her ankles.

"That's all of them. Thank you, Mr. Sand Man!"

They came to the end of their first mile at last.

"Isn't that a different kind of fence?" asked Clara, pointing ahead.

As they approached they saw it more clearly—a three-wire cross fence, running at right angles to their line of progress.

"A section fence. That means we've gone one mile from the first fence back of the Irishman's shanty."

Brand held the wires apart while Clara slipped through, after which he climbed through, himself.

Some time later they stumbled upon an adventure sufficient to jump any man's heart into his mouth. Except for the continuous low murmur of distant waterfowl, the night was very still. They were walking along the side of a hill, picking their way over the tufts of heavy bunch grass, when suddenly, without warning, they stepped into the midst of a covey of young prairie chickens. There was a twisting under foot, an upheaval, a great outrush of beating wings, like the noise of a popping safety valve, and the air ahead was full of frightened birds.

Clara, already under great nervous strain, jumped backward, startled, clutching at her heart.

"Why ——" she cried.

Brand, half a step in advance, reacted differently to the shock of surprise. Instead of springing backward, with the quickness of a varsity fullback he threw himself forward upon the ground. The next instant he rose with a struggling young pullet in his hands. Breaking its neck as he ran, he threw it at Clara's feet and set out after another young prairie chicken that was fluttering and dodging down the hill—the one whose wing he had stepped on. This one gave him more trouble, but he overtook it and brought it back up the hill in triumph.

Clara, who neither recognized the cause of the upheaval nor the object of Brand's chase, stood trembling for a moment; then she listened to the call of her nerves and sank down in a frightened huddle upon the ground, where Brand found her.

"Did they frighten you?" he asked.

She shuddered.

"Prairie chickens! They got to sleeping too soundly and allowed us to walk right into their bedroom. See! Two of them! If we had some wood we could cook them; but there is none."

He held up his trophies. Then he extended his hand to assist Clara to her feet. Not until then did he become aware that all was not well with the girl.

"You were frightened! You're trembling! And I didn't know!"

He leaned down over her, frightened now himself.

"I suppose I'm—I'm just tired and nervous."

The upshot of it was that they were obliged to rest for ten minutes, until her nerves became steadier; and when at last they proceeded, instead of walking separately, as they had been doing, they walked hand in hand for a while. Hand in hand in the moonlight! Little hand in large hand! Tingling large hand clasped over clinging little hand tenderly and protectingly, as if it had done nothing else but that since time began. Brand and Clara! Timidest man and primmest pretty girl!

They walked on so, uphill, downhill, through grama grass, over sand, round marshy places.

"I have something for you," said Brand at the next stop but four. Clara foolishly insisted upon removing her hand when they rested. "Something beautiful and fine!"

He walked back a few steps, where he leaned down and carefully severed a stem with his knife.

"A wild rose in full bloom. From me to you."

Clara took the flower and impulsively pressed it to her face.

"It's a symbol," continued Brand. "Interpret it how you like."

"I shall call it a symbol of faithfulness—because of your patience with me."

This mile was more hilly. Before long the complication of water also presented itself; the little valleys all contained lakes,

Wife—or chattel?

"THE CHATTEL"

The Five Part Vitagraph Photoplay

in which

E. H. SOTHERN

makes his screen début, realizes the ideal which the founders of the Vitagraph Company set for themselves twenty years ago.

With mechanical perfection achieved, with the best literary talent to draw on for scenarios, the final step in the development of the perfect photoplay is taken when

The Foremost Actor of the Modern Stage Puts His Wonderful Art Into Vitagraph Productions

"THE CHATTEL" is a modern drama of one phase of the marriage problem. Is woman an equal, free partner in the marital contract—or is she man's chattel—just one of his possessions?

Without the aid of the spoken word, a drama of this type must depend entirely on subtle characterization in the acting. Mr. Sothern, ably supported by the popular English actress, Peggy Hyland, has created one of the most vivid, deeply human figures the stage or screen has yet seen.

"The Chattel" is a Dramatic Triumph

AT THE STRAND THEATRE, NEW YORK, more than fifteen thousand people—the largest audience in the history of the theatre—crowded their way into the house on the first day "The Chattel" was shown.

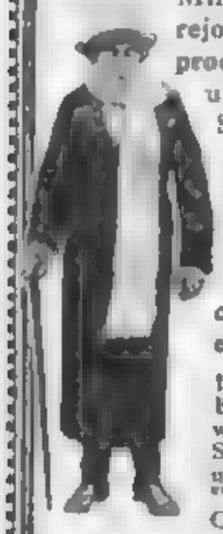
AT THE ZIEGFELD THEATRE, CHICAGO, the best class of the city's population stood in line for hours on the opening days to see "The Chattel."

AT THE WASHINGTON THEATRE, DETROIT, the crowds at the opening performance of "The Chattel" broke all box-office records for the past two years.

See "The Chattel" Now at Your Local Theatre

VITAGRAPH

"THE RIGHT TO BE HAPPY," adapted for the screen from Charles Dickens' immortal classic, "A Christmas Carol," is beyond all question the most famous and best-loved Christmas story ever written.



Millions who read this will rejoice in the BLUEBIRD production, which will visualize for them Old Scrooge and his dead partner Marley's ghost; Bob Cratchit and his happy little family, not forgetting the beloved Tiny Tim with his cheery "God bless us every one."

In this remarkable BLUEBIRD production they may witness the transformation of Scrooge from a miserable, unhappy old miser who said "Humbug!" every time Christmas was mentioned, to a man who rejoiced in the Christmas spirit and tried to make amends on Christmas morning.

"The right to be Happy"

From DICKENS' Immortal Classic "A Christmas Carol"

It's a BLUEBIRD Photo Play

Director Julian, who plays Scrooge, has surrounded himself with players of perfect types; has invested the whole with the captivating Dickens atmosphere; has produced a worthy photo play, inestimably superior to the average "feature," and one which you should ask your favorite theatre manager to show for you and your friends.

All BLUEBIRDS must pass the highest standard set for photo plays before they receive the BLUEBIRD brand. If you attend theatres showing BLUEBIRD Photo Plays you are always assured perfect photo-play entertainment. Look for the BLUEBIRD sign.

Be sure also to see the following BLUEBIRD Productions: "The Bugler of Algiers" — "The Eagle's Wings" — "The Sign of the Poppy"

BLUEBIRD Photo Plays

The Plays That Please

1600 Broadway, New York City

"If it's a BLUEBIRD it's got to be good"

which had to be encircled. That not only increased the distance they had to travel but increased the difficulty of walking by holding them to the softer soil of the hillsides. Toward the end of the mile a depression between two ridges contained a lake so long that there seemed to be no passing it short of an impossible detour.

"Rest a minute while I look it over."

Brand walked along the edge of the water to the left and then back to the right; then he returned to the girl.

"We could go round, but we should lose nearly all the distance we've gained. We could go over, but we're too heavy—anyhow I am. And we could go under, but we're too light—or you are. We shall have to go through."

Clara burst out laughing, but not from amusement. Brand, however, thought she was laughing at his suggestion.

"It will not be so bad as you imagine. Did you think I meant you were to wade? I propose to change myself into a ferryboat and ferry you across."

"Oh, but ——"

"No buts. You will have to allow me to take off my shoes and stockings and roll up my trousers. Then you will have to let me pick you up in my arms and place your arms round my neck, and the thing is done."

"If you think I said 'Oh, but' because of the wading ——"

"I don't. But I'm not tired; and you must."

He sat down, removed his shoes and stockings, rolled up his trouser legs; then, rising, he told her what she had to do. The timidest man told her and leaned over and showed her; the primmest girl clasped her arms round his neck. With his strong arms supporting her, and her soft arms clasped clingingly round his neck, he waded out into the water.

Brand instantly found that lifting a dainty slip of a girl like Clara Rivers in his arms was not like lifting a sack of flour. The helplessness and littleness of her, the warm breath of her, the pressure of her lithe body against his, the tug of her clinging, soft arms—he had to grit his teeth to keep from holding her close. He did not dare think of her delicious nearness. He did not dare remember the pressure of her little hand in his. He did not dare feel how he was trembling. Instead, he forced himself to think very intently of the danger of stumbling, held his arms rigid, held his head high and turned away from hers, and splashed carefully through to the other side. When he reached the bank he set her upon her feet as tenderly as if she had been a little child. He distinctly felt her tremble as she unlocked her arms from his neck. Her hair brushed his face as he rose.

"Did you notice?" he asked, to cover his confusion. "I got turned round. A narrow escape!"

Turned round! Narrow escape!

"That was the day coach," he continued, shifting his figure. "Now comes the baggage car. I'll be back with the rest of us in half a minute."

He noted as he spoke that the tones of his voice had become vibrant, as if sharing the thrill that tingled through his body. He did not dare await her reply, but, turning, almost ran through the water to place it between her and him. Arrived at the other side, he delayed his return until he had recovered his calmness.

Thereafter hill followed upon hill, valley upon valley, lake upon lake. Once again he was forced to carry the girl across a shallow stretch of water. This time, however, he resolutely steeled himself against the thought of her delightful nearness, or the clinging quality of her arms, or the warmth of her breath, or her lithe softness against his shoulder. But he was conscious of them all, and remained conscious of them.

The third mile was passed thus, and eventually the fourth and fifth miles also. The directions given them by the Irishman proved accurate; for some time they had seen the grove of trees ahead. They could see even the windmill against the sky.

The windmill proved to be pumping water into a large watering tank. Their first care was to quench their thirst. Then they approached the house. There was no light; the occupants apparently had retired. The hour was very late.

"We'll have to rout them out; but here we are at last! Tate's Post Office! Now for supper and sleep!"

There was, as each could see clearly, a sign over the door. The letters spelled the words Post Office.

"How very small!" said Clara.

They went up to the house boldly and knocked. There was no response. They knocked again, more loudly. After waiting a long minute for some indication of life within, Brand tried the door.

"Hello, in there!" he called as it yielded to his pressure.

But again he had no response. He thereupon swung the door open and entered. No lamp was needed; the moon shone in softly through the one window, revealing clearly all he needed to know. He gave the interior one glance and then retreated, closing the door behind him.

The house was empty.

V

"THIS can't be the house, Mr. Sand Man. He said 'through the trees.' Don't you remember?"

Brand did remember, and at once resumed his load.

"Through the trees we go. But, if we don't find it, not a limping step farther to-night. Mind that!"

"I'm not tired."

"Don't tell me! You're nearly dead, little girl."

The grove proved to consist of six or eight rows of cottonwoods on a side hill, the ground underneath which had been tramped soft by cattle. The pale light of the moon outside was here replaced by the densest darkness. A four-wire fence extended along the upper row of trees. Beyond the fence a few feet lay the crest of the ridge.

"Isn't that a light?"

But Clara was not tall enough to see, and he helped her through the fence. She waited until he climbed through with the two grips and prairie chickens. Upon reaching the crest they saw clearly that the light came from the windows of a long, narrow house, the front portion of which had been converted into a store and post office. They knocked and entered.

The store comprised a few shelves of groceries and other merchandise behind a short counter—canned fruit, matches, salt, coffee, tobacco, flour; a few articles of tinware most frequently called for; one or two pairs of blankets; overalls; and other articles that a bachelor Kincaider, far from town, would be compelled to buy now and then. The post office was the still shorter counter opposite.

Upon the longer counter stood a lamp, in the light of which a thin woman of perhaps forty sat knitting.

"Took you a long time to get here," she said.

Brand set down his grips and drew up a chair for Clara, who sank into it with a sigh of relief.

"A long time? What do you mean?"

"I thought you'd come; so I stayed up. I don't like to get my sleep broken in hot weather like this."

"You can't possibly have known about us," replied Brand. "But no matter. We've come a great distance and are very tired. I wonder would you make us a pot of coffee and find us a bite to eat?"

The woman indicated Clara with her eyes and thumb.

"Pretty tired, ain't she? School-teacher? Ain't she the teacher down to Wallace?"

"Why do you say that?"

"Ain't she figuring on taking the stage south to-morrow?"

"Has Mrs. Lillie been over?" he asked suspiciously.

But the woman ignored the question.

"Well, she won't."

"What do you mean? Won't what?"

"Take the stage to-morrow. It's changed its routing. It goes back by another road now."

"Doesn't call here in the morning?"

"Not until Monday afternoon."

He looked over at Clara, who was almost too tired to listen.

"Did Mrs. Lillie know about the stage?"

"Oh, she knew it!"

"What is it?" asked Clara. "More trouble?"

"Nothing to bother about now. Only Mrs. Lillie again."

"I'm Mrs. Tate," said the woman. "Mrs. Lillie is nothing to me. At the same time, when it's a question of ——"

But Brand hastily interrupted her.

"A question of supper, you were going to say. The coffee is the main thing. I'll pay you extra for your trouble. Just a pot of hot coffee and a little bread and milk—whatever you have; and then some kind of a bed for Miss Rivers, who is almost exhausted."

"Is your name Brand Dawson?"

"That is my name—yes."

"And she's Miss Rivers?"

"She's Miss Rivers."

"Then you're not man and wife!" announced the astonishing woman.

"Certainly not."

"I can't accommodate you. I've been warned."

"Oh, that's absurd!"

"Over the telephone. Mrs. Lillie described you both. That's how I knew. A tall man, dark hair, light suit, green tie, straw hat—she said. A small girl, light hair, blue eyes, white shirt waist, white duck skirt, white shoes—she said. Her shoes ain't white any more, nor her skirt either; but it fits. It fits. Your name's Brand Dawson and she's Miss Rivers. It fits. She warned me. I'll have nothing to do with you! She wouldn't; and my house is as respectable as hers."

Clara sprang to her feet.

"Come!" she said to Brand. "Let us get off this woman's land at once!"

But Brand shook his head.

"Better sit still and rest. Never mind about her land. You are not on her land."

He was not sure about the solidity of his argument, but it would serve his purpose.

"This land's bought and paid for," observed Mrs. Tate. "You're both of you standing on titled land and I can order you off."

"No," continued Brand. "No. You are in a United States Government Post Office, which is open to the public. You are entirely within your rights. Please be seated!"

Clara seated herself without further protest. Mrs. Tate gasped, started to speak, thought better of it, and ended by giving a provisional acquiescence.

"You can sit there until closing time; but that's all. This post office closes at twelve o'clock to-night. You've got ten minutes yet. Then out you go!"

There was no escaping that logic either.

"Now, Mrs. Tate! We will waive the question of shelter and coffee. You are the hostess. Mrs. Lillie has warned you against us. Setting all that aside, you are a business woman, with a post office and store in your charge. The goods in your store are for sale to anyone who wishes to buy?"

"Everything I got is for sale."

"Very well. I want to make some purchases."

"I sell for cash—spot down!"

"For cash, of course. Better keep a list as I select my goods. I see some blankets on the shelf there. How much are they?"

"You going to sleep outdoors with them?"

"Off your land. How much?"

"I got two good gray blankets I'll sell for five dollars apiece."

"How about sheets?"

"I got my own sheets in the house. I'll sell you two for one dollar and fifty cents. You can't use sheets in the sand."

"Two pairs of blankets; two sheets. Sold. How about a pillow and pillow-slip?"

"You'll have to have two pillows. Mine are all short. They'll come to three dollars with slips. I won't sell them under."

"One pillow I think will do us. Sold, at one dollar and fifty cents—including the slip. How about towels? I want eight large towels."

"What you want of so many?"

"Oh, towels are always useful."

"I got some big huckaback towels. Eight would be two dollars and forty cents, if you want them that good."

"Sold. Have you a tablecloth?"

"I can cut you off some brown denim and you can make you one."

"Two yards. I see you have some dishes and pans."

He went behind the counter and made a rapid selection—four tin plates, two tin cups, a dipper, a large tin pan, two smaller pans, a galvanized-iron water pail, two pairs of iron knives and forks, three tin teaspoons, a tablespoon, a skillet, a washbasin.

"There! I want those! And that castile soap! How much?"

"You can't camp out in these Sand Hills. The dew's too heavy and there ain't any wood. Brule would shoot you if he caught you cutting wood in the grove."

"We'll manage somehow. How much?"

She made a list of the articles and quoted her price—two dollars and eighty-five cents for the lot.

"Sold. Now an oil stove."

"I only got my own and I got to use that myself. That one you're pointing at is only a lamp stove."

"I'll take it. How about a lamp?"

"I got candles."

"A dozen candles, and some kerosene oil for that lamp thing—a gallon, say, in a can. And you might fill it right here for me out of the can."

She filled the lamp stove, trimmed the wick and closed the can.

"You can't burn it out of doors good; nor them candles either."

"Have to try it. That candlestick too. I want that. And that broom."

"You don't want any broom for out of doors."

"To sweep off the tablecloth. Now for something to eat. I want two dozen eggs."

"I only got a dozen and a half. I send all my eggs to town. They'll be forty cents."

"What you have, then. Pork and beans—two cans. Cherries, peaches, pears, plums—one can of each. Sardines—two cans. Salmon—one can. Condensed milk—two cans. One can opener. Sack of salt. Two pounds granulated sugar. A two-pound canister of ground coffee. Oh, bread! Have you any bread?"

"I don't keep bread. We eat bread mostly in the winter. I can't bake very well in the summer on the oil stove."

"Soda crackers, then. Or—hold on! What's that? *Knäckebröd*. Good! That box of *knäckebröd*. Any butter?"

"I don't keep butter. People that want butter out here all make their own, out of cream. But I got some I made for myself I'll sell."

"Fine! Two pounds of butter. What else? That big basket, to carry the stuff in. How much?"

"You can't camp on my land."

"I know! Didn't I tell you? Oh—one thing further: hay. I see a stack of last year's hay beyond the trees. Is that your hay? How much would it be worth?"

"That's on Brule's place. This is a good hay year; Brule, I guess, would be glad to sell that old hay for what it cost to put up."

"How much for one ton?"

"They pay sixty-five cents. Add ten cents profit if you want to buy it from me."

"Sold. And that empty house. Is that Brule's?"

"The old Post Office? Yes; Brule owns all that."

"Suppose I rent that house from you for a dollar a day—three days? You have a telephone. You can rent it from Brule in the morning. Add that to your list. Now how much for everything?"

"I see what you're driving at. I didn't think of that empty house. It's a very good place for you, at that."

"How much for everything?"

Mrs. Tate, visibly affected by the sight of Brand's pocketbook, made the calculation.

"It will come to twenty-nine dollars and seventy-five cents," she said. "And I'll help you carry the goods to the fence, seeing it's so late and you've bought so much, and paid cash."

But to herself, as Brand and Clara passed through the doorway after the final trip:

"Not man and wife! And her such a nice-looking girl!"

VI

THE purchases now lay piled up against a fence post, except the groceries, which Brand had packed in the basket. Mrs. Tate had closed her door and put out the light.

"Better sit down on this blanket and rest," said Brand. "I'll take a load or two to the house while you wait."

Clara dutifully seated herself. Brand started off down the slope, basket under one arm, the lamp stove in his free hand. He had hardly passed out from under the trees, however, when he heard a little cry behind him.

"Wait for me, please, Mr. Sand Man!" And a moment later, when she appeared: "I'm afraid! I want to stay with you."

She made a pathetic and appealing figure, swaying in the moonlight against the dark background of the cottonwoods. He had the strongest desire to drop his parcels and snatch her up in his arms; but back in his mind he knew that he would not. He desired to comfort her, not to distress her. She was tired and frightened. He was her strong and resolute protector. She was very literally in his care. He did not intend to fail her.

"If you are not too tired."

The transportation of their goods required three trips, for Brand would not let Clara carry anything. When he had brought up all their possessions he lighted a candle, opened the door and entered. The girl followed him in; but as they stepped into the doorway she laid her fingers on his arm—and he could feel her tremble. That would not do. He tried to think of something he could say to break the spell of her touch. That would not do either. By a great effort he brought his mind to the immediate work in hand.

"If you will hold the candle," he said with an attempt at lightness, "I'll see what this table looks like underneath the Sand Hills."

She took the candlestick while he tipped up the table and ran the sand off upon the floor. After he had squared it down upon its legs again he had her set the candlestick upon it.

"Not so bad! Now, young lady, do you see that chair? That is to be your throne. In a little while I shall have some work for you. Until then you are not to move. Understand? One wiggle of your little finger and out you go!"

"I don't feel much like disobeying you," replied Clara, taking the chair. "I never was so tired in all my life!"

"Naturally. You've been on your feet for the better part of six hours, and have had nothing to eat for twelve."

The house was one that had been built by the homesteader from whom its present owner, Simon Brule, had bought the land. Brule still used it occasionally and it was, therefore, in repair, though the interior was deeply drifted over with sand that had sifted in through the cracks round the window and door. Its furniture consisted of an ancient stove with two sheet-iron magazines for hay fuel; a pine table; three square-ended empty boxes; a cupboard; two chairs, the seats of which had been laced across with baling wire; and a low bed, which had apparently begun life as a barn door.

Brand's first act was to spread the brown denim over the table. He then unloaded his groceries and supplies upon one end, placed the tinware in the now empty basket, and went to the windmill, where he gave each piece a thorough washing. The galvanized pail he brought back filled with water, placed it upon one of the up-ended boxes, placed the washbasin, with soap, upon another, and the lamp stove upon the third. The stove he now lighted. After he had measured off four tin cupfuls of water into the coffeepot and added nine heaping teaspoonfuls of coffee, he set the pot upon the stove to heat.

"Slow work, boiling water over a lamp; but it's the best we can do."

He next opened the window. After that he swept out—an easy task, for the sand, though fine, was heavy and did not rise as dust in any uncontrollable manner. Then he took the two prairie chickens and the larger pan and went to the door.

"I'll have to clean them away from the house; but I'll remain in sight and be back in half a minute."

He skinned and cleaned them in an incredibly short time, washed them, salted them heavily, transferred them to a smaller pan, and, after comparing the merits of the cupboard and the oven of the old stove, decided upon the oven for their storage. He also washed six eggs carefully and laid them in a row on the table.

"Don't worry!" he said. "I'm not crazy. Just watch me and say neither yea nor nay."

He then set out the tin dishes, knives, forks and spoons, and opened a can of condensed milk, a can of peaches, a can of pork and beans, and the carton containing *knäckebröd*. The pork and beans he divided between Clara's plate and his own, using the rinsed can later for his portion of the peaches. Sugar and salt were accessible in the original packages.

When the coffee came to a boil, as all coffee will at last, he slipped the six eggs one by one into the pot.

"Only way we can cook them with our outfit. Say nothing!"

At the end of three minutes he was able to fish out the eggs and lay them beside the plates.

"Now sit up and eat. Hot coffee, hot eggs, pork and beans, canned peaches, *knäckebröd;* and the coffee I guarantee will be good."

Clara drew up her chair, almost too tired to be hungry. She smiled, however, when Brand awkwardly removed her hat and hung it upon a nail in the wall. She even tried to reply to some of his cheerful chatter, until he stopped her and told her he was doing the talking.

As he had promised, the coffee was hot and good. Between them they drank all of it. Clara found her spirits enough revived to eat rather heartily of the food he had supplied. She even liked the *knäckebröd*, in spite of its dryness and toughness.

"Made from rye meal," said Brand. "Swedish. Happens to fit in with the life out here, I suppose."

"It's like hard-tack."

"That's what it is—rye hard-tack."

When they had finished Brand repeated his command that the girl should remain in her chair.

"Oh, but I'm rested now. I want to help you."

"To-morrow for that. To-night you are very tired and must get to sleep. I am going to make your bed for you upon those boards. This room will be your room. I shall make my bed outside, against the end of the house, so that you can call me by rapping."

But Clara would not have it so.

"Not sleep under a roof? That would be foolish! You can hang a curtain and make a comfortable bed on the floor."

"No." He smiled grimly. "That would not satisfy Mrs. Grundy."

"Mrs. Grundy! After this!"

"Nevertheless, it must be as I say. This will be your room. You can lock yourself in. The door seems to have no regular key, but there is a latch——"

"Latch!"

"Mrs. Lillie and her tribe may say what they will—we can't help that; but I want you to be able to say to your mother that we acted so and so and so."

"But you? My poor friend!"

"Call it a sleeping porch and envy me."

"Anyhow, I will help you make up the beds."

"You can help me best by resting. How do you think I should fare if you were to become ill? You are such a little girl, and I am a strong man. You are nearly asleep this minute. I am not even tired."

"I am not!"

"You ought to be if you're not. Now will you sit back out of the way while I make up your bed?"

Clara moved over to the center of the room and Brand began bringing in hay. This he spread upon the barn door, tearing it apart and laying it evenly as he went along. When the depth reached eighteen inches or so he very carefully went over it for humps. Then he spread both pairs of blankets over the surface as smoothly as possible, but left the top pair opened back for the sheets and pillow. These were quickly added. A moment later he announced that it was bedtime.

"Blow out the candle when you are through with it."

"But—where are your own blankets? You've used both pairs on my bed!"

"I never use blankets in the hay," he replied. "You are very sleepy or you wouldn't ask such questions."

He smiled back at her from the door. His feeling had subtly changed since entering the little house. He still felt the longing to snatch her up in his arms; but superimposed upon that longing was a sense of responsibility and tenderness as for one given to him to guard and cheer.

"Good night, little comrade!" he said, in the formula he might have used for a child. "Sleep tight! Wake up in the morning bright!"

"Good night, faithful Sand Man!"

VII

ANY animal can be teased into biting—if it has teeth. A woman is an animal and possessed of at least figurative teeth. Mrs. Lillie, when she refused her hospitality to her fellow travelers, had merely used her teeth, like her fellow animals.

She was not through with her annoyers. Hatred such as hers does not discharge itself between words like a Leyden jar. Knowing Clara's plans as she did, she was able to continue hating her and Brand even after they had passed out of sight into the gloom of evening. Her ranch had connection by telephone, through Tate's, with Yardley Post Office, the end of the Welton mail route. A call, a word, an inflection of the voice—and the thing was done.

She first called up Mrs. Tate, on the plea of engaging her interest. A man named Brand Dawson and a girl—not married to him—named Clara Rivers were on the way to Tate's to catch the Welton stage, which would leave, as they supposed, in the morning. She would have kept them herself, but she really hadn't had the room.

After luncheon at noon, before buckling down, *wingfoot* a little while.

Remind your red corpuscles to get on the job—breathe plenty of air and laugh.

Then back to your work—how fine you feel! You'll want *Wingfoot* dessert every day.

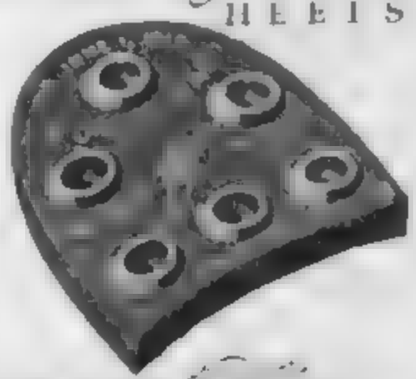
* *

The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company guarantees Wingfoots to outwear any other rubber heel. A new pair free if yours do not.

Wingfoots in black, white and tan, for big folks and little folks—50 cents—put on by shoe dealers and repair men.

The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.
Akron, Ohio

WING FOOT HEELS



GOOD YEAR AKRON

THE "PEP"
Wide semi-V opening, with broad chest effect, narrow shoulders, three buttons

Your evening waistcoat must have that smart style characteristic of the well-dressed gentleman.

By insisting upon the "R & W" label you will insure the style and quality of your selection.

Makers of good overcoats, raincoats, trousers, fancy and dress waistcoats, smoking jackets, bathrobes, summer clothing, golf and automobile apparel.

Rosenwald & Weil

Clothing Specialties

CHICAGO

In One Winter Month

DAVID DUFF, who makes his home in Ohio, earned enough money to pay the greater part of his college expenses.

The college year was well under way and Duff's time was pretty well occupied. But a letter to us, a spare-time campaign carefully planned, and within thirty days he secured enough new and renewal subscriptions for THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL and THE COUNTRY GENTLEMAN to give him—

$500.00 Profit

How much money do YOU need? The same plan that made Mr. Duff's spare time so profitable will quickly give you as much as you want.

Let us tell you all about it.

Box 708, Educational Division
THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY
Independence Square, Philadelphia

Yes; she knew about the stage. No; she did not know anything wrong about them—not a thing—except that they were not married. No; all she knew about the Rivers girl was that she claimed to have a school at Wallace Post Office. Mrs. Tate could find out about that by asking the Wallace postmaster, not quoting her in any way. Yes; she would describe the girl—the man also. When did they start? About eight; but she thought they would take their time. On foot! Certainly! They had tried to hire a team, but she really hadn't been able to spare one.

She next got the Welton carrier on the wire at Yardley. She desired to engage, she said, his entire capacity for Monday afternoon, from Tate's Post Office to Welton. Yes; both passenger and freight. Yes; she would add a bonus to his rates. Yes; the amount he named would be satisfactory.

Then she went to bed. She had torpedoed two ships—probably three—and was tired.

Brand was up and out before it was fully light. He had been awake since the first flush of dawn, after he did not dare to think how few hours of sleep. Taking his Oxford bag with him, he now walked lightly over to the water tank, where he shaved and bathed.

Life is curiously inconsistent, he reflected. Twenty-four hours earlier he had been asleep in the hotel at Whitefield, unsuspicious of even the existence of a Clara Rivers. And now! Here he was, and here she was, spending the week-end together in the heart of the Sand Hills. Forced to spend it together by a woman scorned! Their situation such as demanded his utmost resources of delicacy to meet; yet happy beyond words that they were thus forced together.

Then he proceeded to dress; and his dressing had suddenly become a matter for thoughtful care. He found himself feelingly thankful that he had freshly laundered linen of city quality with him, and ties that would not fall under Mrs. Lillie's description as green. He wished that he had brought an extra pair of shoes. The sand had cut away the polish beyond remedy of those he was wearing. He managed to rub up the leather a little, however, so that they did not look their condition.

After dressing he found two empty narrow canvas sacks, with a length of whipcord, in his bag. These he thrust into his side coat pocket. He did not return to the house; instead, he climbed the ridge, through the cottonwoods, making a circle round the post office to the hills behind for a look over the country.

He seemed to be standing on the southern edge of a winding valley, through the high grasses of which he and Clara had struggled the night before. This valley was not closed at the ends, like most Sand Hills depressions, but might have been eroded by a stream. Probably it had been. Then, with the shifting of the dunes, the distant springs that fed it had become choked; and later the valley itself had been filled in and hollowed out here and there by the wind. It now contained a number of shallow lakes of no great extent. These did not interest him; but he thought he detected a difference in the character of the soil, and filled the two sacks from selected test spots, tying their ends firmly with whipcord.

On his way back he stopped at the post office. He wished to catch the stage driver before he left Yardley.

Mrs. Tate had somewhat recovered from her hostility of the night before and seemed willing to help him in any possible way.

"I called up Simon Brule first thing," she told him. "You can have the house until Monday evening. Lucky thing too! I hadn't hung up more than five minutes when Mrs. Lillie rang asking if you'd come. When I told her where you were, and for how long, she said she was just going to rent the Brule house herself; but Monday would do."

"We'll not need it after Monday."

She did not tell him, however, that she had also called up Postmaster Ames, at Wallace, inquiring whether a Miss Rivers had a school there, or that Mr. Ames had been inquisitive to know the reason for the inquiry.

"I wonder, now, if you could get that stage driver for me? I'd like him to do an errand or two in Welton."

Mrs. Tate managed to reach the driver, after which Brand explained what he desired. He neglected to speak of transportation. As the driver did not mention the fact that Mrs. Lillie had engaged his entire capacity for the next trip, Brand returned carefree to his nest in the hay, where he awaited, with a singing heart, the real beginning of the day. It was more than two hours later when a pounding on the wall inside brought him to his feet.

"Good morning!"

The littlest girl was standing in the open door, looking as fresh as roses after rain. She, too, had groomed herself with special care. Her eyes were bright; her cheeks glowed; her lips were so happy they smiled of themselves. No need to ask questions about her health.

"How did you sleep?" he asked nevertheless.

"Shamefully well! I ought to have tossed about all night fretting because you had to sleep under the stars; but I didn't. How did you sleep?"

"Like a dead Indian! I ought to have lain awake over getting you into this predicament, but I didn't either."

"Predicament!"

"If it hadn't been for me you would not be in this trouble."

"I know. My soul in heaven wouldn't. As for my poor body, the cattlemen maybe would have found it hanging across some fence before next week's washday."

"If it hadn't been for me Mrs. Lillie would have given you a bed."

"If it hadn't been for me she would have given you one."

"Aren't you sorry?"

"Aren't you? . . . We need a new pail of water," she cried suddenly. "I used up all last night's water washing dreams out of my eyes."

"There's only one thing in the Sand Hills I'd rather carry than water," said Brand.

"What thing is that?" But the moment she had spoken she flushed to the roots of her hair. "P'ease go for the water!"

When she pounded on the side of the house Clara had already made up her bed, swept out, washed the supper dishes, set the table, and opened a can of cherries. Following the night cook's suggestion, she now slipped four washed eggs into the boiling coffee. Brand upon his return from the well found breakfast awaiting him.

It was not the breakfast, however, that arrested his eyes. Upon the table stood a cylindrical white jar, from the top of which a full-blown wild rose lifted its sensitive head.

"Peach can," explained Clara. "I covered it with a sheet of white writing paper I had."

"That's the wild rose I gave you."

"Was it you? I couldn't tell; it was so dark. I knew it was some man, and so I saved it."

"It meant very precious things to some man—last night."

"Flowers always do—last night."

"But it means more now."

"Less."

"More. Because you saved it."

"How will you have your breakfast, Mr. Sand Man? Standing? I refuse to quarrel with you. If you say it's more—why, then, more!"

He removed the sacks from his pockets and seated himself.

"What are those?"

"Oh! Those are samples of the country. Soil; sand, in fact. I'm getting them for a man in the East."

"They look like clubs. Why do you have them so long and narrow?"

"It's a good shape for filing away," said Brand. "I'd hate to be hit with one. They'd make beautiful sandbags."

After breakfast Clara turned down the wick of the stove, but did not remove the pan of water she had heated for the dishes.

"Sooty bottom. We'll have to use it where it stands."

They now began upon the dishwashing, working together like honeymooners. Clara would wash a tin plate, rinse it in cold water and hand it toward Brand. Their eyes would meet; he would reach for the plate, grope for it, touch her fingers, little tingles of electricity would run through his body at that, and, because such effects follow such causes, through her body also; he would laugh; she would laugh; and then he would take the plate and dry it upon the dishtowel. Then they would begin anew upon the second plate—washing and rinsing it, groping for it, touching fingers over it; electric thrills would again shiver through their bodies; and they would laugh and ultimately lay it aside, dry. And when the tin plates ran out they had the two tin cups and the three tin spoons and the four knives and forks. Dishwashing is a very old and very delightful occupation.

They did little during the remainder of the morning—except possibly become better acquainted.

Toward noon Brand inspected the ancient stove. Not even a chef from Paris can fry prairie chickens upon a one-burner lamp stove. It proved to be an old-fashioned four-lid cookstove from which the grate had been removed. Two magazines for hay fuel stood in the corner behind it. These were also of the older type, shaped like deep wash-boilers. Brand took them to the stack and tramped them full of hay; then, removing the two front lids and intermediate cross-plate from the top, he inverted one of the magazines over the exposed fire box.

"I shall be the cook," announced Clara.

"Very well. I shall be the fireman. Tell me when."

Clara prepared for the operation by first crushing three wafers of *knäckebröd* into crumbs. Then she divided the fowls into convenient pieces and rolled them in the crumbs. The skillet she supplied with a liberal amount of butter and placed it on the stove.

"Any time," she said.

Brand touched a match to the hay, opened the draft, and with a roar the flame shot down and back and up the chimney. Almost instantly the top lids became cherry red. All he had to do then was to choke back the draft until the heat suited the cook.

"They're fat and young. They'll be good. I thought we might need the wishbones—I carved so as to leave them whole."

As the skillet would take only one chicken at a time, she placed her first frying in the oven, where it would keep hot. The two magazines of hay proved sufficient to fry both chickens, boil the coffee and heat the dishwater. They proved sufficient to drive both cook and fireman outdoors into the shade of the house also. Brand carried out the table and chairs. By the time they sat down they were flushed and hot. As if they cared for that!

"I never ate anything so delicious!"

"Nor I—except your supper last night. Do you think you could catch any more?"

"We might try. I remember the place!"

And both laughed as if such another experience would be the greatest lark in the world.

They came at last to the wishbones.

"Will you wish with me?"

Brand, who had not pulled a wishbone since he was a child—probably never with a girl—accepted the challenge, and after another attack of tingles promptly lost. He followed up that failure by losing again on his own challenge.

"Never mind. I wished for you."

"What did you wish for me?"

"Money!" she said, and laughed.

Then they washed dishes again, and visited; and when the time came for supper they cooked it and washed further dishes. Later they went to their beds—Clara in the house, Brand in his pile of hay outside. And the next morning, which was Sunday, they had breakfast, and washed dishes, and visited; and so on during that day. They were very happy.

VIII

THE sky had been overcast since four o'clock, but storm clouds did not appear until after supper, when Clara called attention to the inky growth above the horizon in the southwest.

"It looks like wind," she remarked.

The growth increased in blackness and extent until in a short time the entire southwestern sky was like billowing smoke of pitch, with jagged shafts of lightning shuttling through it from left to right.

"Terrific storm coming, I'm afraid," said Brand. "Think I'd better close that window while I can."

"Better get your baggage inside."

"Yes, and my towels; and I'd better fetch a bucket of water for morning."

The clouds were now approaching at express speed. The lightning discharge increased until the flashes were not so much consecutive as continuous. The low rumbling of thunder became deafening crashes. Brand closed the window, brought in his Oxford bag and towels, and drew a fresh bucket of water. Then he stood beside Clara, watching the electrical display.

The storm broke suddenly. A gust of wind, a few heavy drops of water; then

drenching torrents of rain, mingled with hail. Blinding flashes of lightning were followed so instantly by the crash that the effect was simultaneous. The wind wrenched at the little house until every nail in it creaked. But the house was well anchored and well roofed, and aside from a few harmless dribbles of water no shelter could have been more weatherproof.

The rain slackened after a while, but did not wholly cease. Darkness fell early. Eight o'clock came, then nine; and still no sign of clearing.

"Think I'll say good night and make a run for the stack," announced Brand finally.

"Not out in this rain! I'll not let you do that."

"To-night I shall remove to the haystack, where I shall burrow into the overhanging side until no water can touch me."

"I wish you wouldn't," she said.

"Afraid?"

He remembered that the stack was farther from the house. On the preceding nights he had been within call.

"No—except for you."

Opening his Oxford bag he took out his pistol.

"Keep this thing by you; under your pillow is a good place. Not that you'll need a pistol, but having one round makes you feel less lonely. A pistol is something like a cat. You know you'll never need a cat, but you feel better having one in case you should."

"What will you have, then?"

"Oh, I'll have those sandbags!"

He showed her how to use the thing—how to place it at safety; how to hold it; how to press the trigger.

"I'd rather not," objected the girl. "I'm more afraid of the pistol than I should be of a burglar."

"Put it on that chair within reach if you're afraid of it under your pillow. See—I'll place it at safety and lay it pointing away from you. Yet if you want it you can reach it. I'll take my stuff along. When you're ready for me, in the morning, open the door and pound on a tin pan. Good night!"

The rain by now had almost ceased. Brand made a run for his shelter. Once in the lee of the stack he set to work to burrow still farther under the overhanging top until he had a comfortable niche. Here he slipped off his shoes and prepared to fall asleep. But to-night he was not physically tired. His thoughts were full of the girl in the house. Sleep would not come. Perhaps it was just as well. Life is too short to waste an entire night in slumber while you have the smiles of the only girl to fill your wakeful eyes.

Bud Larkin, of the Brule Outfit, got the news from Ab Berryman, who had it from Hurry Halpin, who had it from a Kincaider named Kurtz, who had it, in turn, from a man who picked it up as gossip under a rosebush. By the time Bud heard it, therefore, its relation to fact was very remote indeed. Bud Larkin was a new man at Brule's. He had come in, from no one knew where, for the haying season. After his work at Brule's was done he would depart for no one cared where. He had a huge body and worked well; wherever he went he would find his services in demand.

Bud wasted no time with his conscience, but hurried through supper and quietly slipped away. He had been on the place long enough to know his geography. The empty house near the east line—he knew it well. Four miles due east it was, just north of Tate's. The grass was wet, but he wore heavy boots. It was still drizzling, but he had a good canvas coat; and, besides, he did not mind a little rain. He thought he would walk over and see what was up. Ab Berryman had said —— But no matter. Where there are burs there is sand.

Clara latched the door when Brand left, but did not blow out the candle or disrobe for bed; instead, she threw herself upon her couch and lay listening to the slow spat of raindrops against the window glass. She was not easy in her mind about Brand. What if another torrent of rain should come, along with a change of wind? She wished she had insisted upon his remaining inside.

It was more delicate than sensible of him to treat the situation as he did.

Then she began thinking about all the events of the days since they had been thrown together. He might have avoided making an enemy of Mrs. Lillie, and had not done so. She liked him for that. He had been slow to understand Mrs. Lillie's insolence. She liked him for that also. And when he did understand he had said the one thing possible to say to a woman. Since then he had met and mastered each trying situation as it arose. No one but a man of quick resourcefulness could have taken over this little house as he had done. He had not failed her once in delicacy or in firmness.

And now he was sleeping out in the rain for her! There was still time to insist. The candle was still burning. If only he were more sensible!

There came a knocking at the door. He had changed his mind, after all! She sprang to her feet, crossed swiftly, shifted the latch; then she opened the door.

"Come in!" she said. "I was hoping ——"

The words died away in a gurgle of terror. Instead of Brand a huge stranger stood in the doorway—a wet, red, leering creature with hideous appraising eyes.

"I knowed you must be lonesome, girlie. Course I'll come in!"

She backed away from him as he leisurely entered. She wanted to scream; but even with the shock of terror came the thought that she must not scream until she reached her pistol. A scream would bring Brand, who was unarmed. Brand was tall and strong, but he was no match for this giant. If only she had not taken the pistol!

"Now, now! I'm yer friend! I'm for you strong!"

A change seemed to come over him—he was no longer leisurely. He did not become hurried; only careful.

"Now, now!"

As the girl backed away he slowly advanced, his eyes on her face.

"Now, now! Now, now!"

She had backed to the table, past it, keeping the chair behind her so that he would not see. But there was no need—his eyes did not leave her.

"Now, now! Now, now!"

She had backed to the bed; she had reached the chair; she had brought the pistol up shakingly in front of her.

"Stop, or I'll fire!" she cried.

The giant seemed to glance down at the weapon; then, whether because he had noticed how it was held, or saw her shaking hand, or read in her mind that she had forgotten Brand's directions as to the safety position, he seemed to pay no further attention to it, but continued his slow advance.

"Now, now! Don't be scared! Don't be scared!"

The girl knew the movement by a kind of instinct. She knew that when near enough he would make a sudden spring and seize her. She herself crept forward like that when catching anything.

"I'll shoot! I will!"

"You wouldn't shoot me, girlie! I'm yer friend! I got a right here. I'm from the ranch. This house is on our place."

"Stand back!"

"Put the gun down, girlie. Put it down!"

She could retreat no farther. He had continued his slow advance. In two more steps he would be near enough for his spring. He was near enough already. He was about to spring—she could see the dreadful determination in his eyes.

She closed her eyes then—closed her eyes and pulled the trigger of the pistol, which she had managed to keep pointed at his huge body. She thought there was no response, that the pistol refused to fire; but there was a heavy fall, and a moment later, when she opened her eyes, she saw the intruder stretched motionless upon the floor. She thought she saw Brand at a great distance. She tried to call to him. Then the room went black and she knew no more.

Brand Dawson, with his shoes removed, lay in his niche in the haystack thinking of the pictures he had seen that day. He began with the last and worked backward to the first; then at the first and worked forward.

He had reached for the second time the picture made by the littlest girl as she said good night—when he heard a heavy step over at one side, as of somebody walking. He half rose to look, but could see nothing.

A little later came a faint knocking. Callers? At this time of the night! He would put on his shoes and see. Clara would be frightened. He was glad her door was locked.

A little later still and he himself was frightened. The knocking was followed by

BLUE STREAKS

$2.50 each

Guaranteed

A FORTUNE in machinery was thrown to the scrap heap when Goodyear decided to concentrate all its bicycle tire knowledge and resources in one standardized bicycle tire, to be sold at a fair price.

One tire—one price—one quality—one guaranty—that is the Goodyear policy today, as built into Goodyear Bicycle Tires. And we call these tires Blue Streaks—"streaks" for the speed that is in them—"blue" for the loyalty in them.

For Blue Streaks laugh at time and mileage—they are built for a long life of service. Ask your dealer for these handsome, speedy tires with the ironclad guaranty.

The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., Akron, O.

GOODYEAR
AKRON

SERVICE
A True Story

In a great State whose school children have to buy their own books, lives little Dick Trippe. Dick's father lost his job last summer. Family funds ran low, and there was no money for books. So Dick spent two months out of school.

Dick saw other boys selling *The Saturday Evening Post*. Because he had ambition, he too became a *Post* boy. Thus he met a Curtis Counselor.

Four days after the meeting, Dick was back in school. In that time the Counselor had taken Dick's case to the school authorities, convinced them that the Trippe youngster was worth helping, made arrangements for a doctor to vaccinate Dick, and started him off to school with a full set of books.

The father and mother haven't yet made up their minds what the Counselor's "game" was. But the Counselor had no deep, dark motive at all. That's just his job—to help *Post* boys make the most of themselves.

A booklet, telling all about this educational work that a great Publishing Company is doing with its many thousands of boys, has been prepared. Would you like to have it? Just a line with your name and address will bring it to you. Address

BOX 705, SALES DIVISION
THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY
INDEPENDENCE SQUARE, PHILADELPHIA

Saves Time
Saves Labor
For that hungry feeling—
FULL-MEAL
"That's enough"
Choice beef and selected vegetables ready cooked in can. Served in 5 minutes as baked dish, stew, in sandwiches—or made into soup.
Baked—Place contents of can in baking dish, cover with bread crumbs, dot with butter, brown in oven. Other Recipes on can.
Ask your grocer. If he does not have "Full-Meal," send his name and address, enclosing 20 cents for full sized sample can, sent Parcel Post Prepaid.
The Haserot Canneries Co.
Dept. A
Cleveland, Ohio
FULL-MEAL
VEGETABLES—MEAT

If You Have RIG or AUTO, Earn $83 to $325 a Month

working spare time or steady in your own locality for largest concern of its kind in the world. Not necessary to be away from home nights. No previous experience necessary. Work consists in leaving in homes on free trial a wonderful new household necessity needed in every rural home. Awarded Gold Medal. Greatest invention of the age. Tested by the U. S. Bureau of Standards and thirty leading universities in comparison with article now in general use, and found to be four times as efficient. Benefits every member of the family; brings cheer and happiness to the home. **No investment or bond necessary.**

Christensen, Wisconsin, says: "Have never seen an article that sells so easily." Norris, Iowa, says: "92 per cent of homes visited bought." Phillips, Ohio, says: "Every customer becomes a friend and booster." Kenneling, Minn., says: "No flowery talk necessary. Sells itself."

Send your name and address, stating your regular occupation, age, married or single; whether you have rig or auto; whether you wish to work spare time or steady; how much time you have to devote; when you can start; town in most convenient for you to work in. **Sample sent for free trial.**

A. B. SHEPPY, Sales Mgr., 168 No. Halsted St., CHICAGO

STUDY LAW 30 Days FREE

Let us prove to your entire satisfaction, at our expense, that the Hamilton College of Law is the only recognized resident law school in U. S. Conferring Degree of Bachelor of Laws—LL. B.—by correspondence. Only law school in U. S. conducting standard resident school and giving same instruction by mail. Over 500 classroom lectures. Faculty of over 30 prominent lawyers. Guarantee to prepare graduates to pass bar examination. Only law school giving Complete Course in Oratory and Public Speaking. School highly endorsed and recommended by Gov. Officials, Business Men, Noted Lawyers and Students. Send today for Large, Handsomely Illustrated Prospectus and Special 30-Day Free Trial.

HAMILTON COLLEGE OF LAW, 1204 Advertising Bldg., Chicago

WOULD YOU

show this standard high grade 42 key fully visible typewriter to your friends and let them see wherein it excels any $100 typewriter, if by doing this and other small assistance, you could easily have one to keep as your own? Then by post card or letter simply say, "*Mail Particulars.*"

WOODSTOCK TYPEWRITER CO., Dept. 408, Chicago, Ill.

Ballard's Bran
IDEAL DRUGLESS LAXATIVE

At your Grocer's. If he does not have it, send us his name and address with 35c (West of Denver 40c) in stamps for trial package.

BALLARD & BALLARD CO.
Station C Louisville, Ky.

WANTED NEW IDEAS Write for List of Inventions Wanted by manufacturers and $1,000,000 in prizes offered for inventions. Our four books sent Free. Send sketch for *Free* opinion as to patentability.
Victor J. Evans & Co., 727 Ninth, Washington, D. C.

We Will Buy Your Spare Time

Let us tell you about our Money-Making Plan.
Agency Division, Box 709,
THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY, Philadelphia

PATENTABLE IDEAS WANTED. Manufacturers want Owen Patents. Send for 3 free books; inventions wanted, etc. I help you market your invention without charge.
RICHARD B. OWEN, 33 Owen Bldg., Washington, D. C.

WANTED—AN IDEA! Who can think of some simple thing to patent? Protect your ideas, they may bring you wealth. Write for "Needed Inventions" and "How to Get Your Patent and Your Money." RANDOLPH & Co., Dept. 137, Patent Attorneys, Washington, D. C.

PATENTS SECURED OR FEE RETURNED
Actual search free. Send sketch or model. 90-page, 1916 Edition Patent Book free.
GEORGE P. KIMMEL, 211 Barrister Bldg., Washington, D. C.

the sound of a man's voice. She had come to the door!

No time now for the lacing of shoes! No time for weapons either! He had his two fists and the canvas sacks filled with samples of sand—the clublike sandbags; no other weapons of any kind. But probably weapons were not needed. What was needed was his reassuring presence, and that as quickly as possible. Nevertheless, he slipped one of the sacks into his pocket.

Though he had set out almost instantly and the distance was not great, by the time he reached the corner of the house the caller had disappeared inside.

No ordinary caller this! Clara alone; a man's voice; the door, which had been locked, now open; and no one in sight ——

Then came the low words of Bud Larkin and Clara's terrified threat, heard clearly through the open doorway—by which Brand knew that it was indeed no ordinary caller. Slipping off his shoes he crept carefully along the side of the house until he came to the door. He saw the intruder, perceived the bulk of him, understood the responsibility that rested upon him. He must act swiftly and surely. The sack he held in his hand, after all, was a sandbag—a deadly weapon, none deadlier, from behind. He was in his stocking feet. The view of the doorway was cut off from Clara by the stranger, who faced her—there need be no inadvertent alarm.

Brand found himself strangely calm and alert. He knew what he had to do. He knew that the stranger had his attention fixed upon the girl and probably would not look round. If he did—he held himself ready for that too. Making no noise he slipped through the doorway and across the floor; and when the brutal ranch hand prepared to spring, and Clara closed her eyes and pulled the trigger, Brand swung at his head with all his strength. His blow landed directly above the right ear. A thug could not have done the thing more neatly. Bud dropped like a tenpin. No second blow was required.

Clara, lying back upon her pillow, where Brand had laid her, was watching her faithful Sand Man. Brand in turn was watching Bud Larkin, on the floor, who would soon be ready, if he had luck, to begin watching the rafters.

Bud opened his eyes presently, saw Brand standing over him—shoes on his feet, pistol in hand—and groaned.

"Not dead; but you may be any second," threatened Brand.

"The lady shot me, boss. I wasn't meanin' no harm. I was just ——"

"Get up!" said Brand, stirring him in the paunch with his hard toe.

"She shot me! I wasn't doing a thing."

"I know what you were doing. She tried to shoot you; but she didn't. I hit you. That's what happened to you. Get up!"

"You hit me?"

"I hit you."

"You sure have got a wallop, boss."

"Get up—and quick!"

The fallen giant pulled himself together and rose after a little further physical urging. Clara shuddered and turned away her eyes.

"Stand over there, with your hands high! I hit you because I didn't have my gun. But I've got it now—and extra cartridges! And I'll use it. Make one move I don't like and down you go for keepsakes! Glad for the chance! And if I ever catch you within half a mile of this place again, false move or not, right there is where you will lie buried!"

"I got enough! I got a plenty!"

"Then pick up your hat and get your filthy carcass out of here."

Bud did not wait for a politer invitation, but reached for his hat.

"Halt!" Brand stopped him at the door. "I'm only sorry the wet night will prevent my kicking you twice. I'll have to make it up by shooting at your heels."

"Don't shoot, boss! Don't shoot!"

"Now run—damn you! And don't stop for a mile! Run! Faster! Run! Run!"

Brand began shooting into the sand to hurry him along. But there was no need. No big man ever made faster time anywhere than Bud Larkin made that night, for all he couldn't see two steps ahead of him. He ran so fast that he ran into the lower fence before he knew he was halfway there, and carried away two wires. Brand heard him swear, and shot four times more, to help him tear loose. The last sound from the homeward-bound wanderer came from a none-too-shallow lake a quarter of a mile farther away, and was the sound of splashing as he plunged through it.

Clara was lying back upon the pillow, still very white. Brand was standing over her, very sober.

"I must have fainted," said Clara ruefully. "I thought I shot him! I—I pulled the trigger and heard something fall; and when I looked he was lying on the floor. And then —— That's all I remember until I saw you with the pistol."

"The gun was at safety."

"What happened?"

"I happened. I hit him with a sandbag. Now you must get to sleep. It's all right."

"You're not leaving me again?"

"No," he promised. "I'm going to hang up one of your blankets for a curtain and stay indoors."

She shuddered and closed her eyes. She could see him yet—the gigantic dripping stranger slowly closing in upon her.

"Don't think about it, little girl. He's gone for good. I ran him into a barbed-wire fence. The wires are singing yet. Then into a lake."

She extended her hand toward him gropingly. He bent down and took it tenderly in his own, as he had done before when she was frightened—little hand in large hand; soft little fingers lying closed within his heavy palm. The touch of his hand seemed to calm her. She lay trembling for a moment and then became quiet, almost as if she was about to go to sleep. But the clasp of her fingers did not relax; and after a moment she opened her eyes.

"Feeling stronger?"

"Much!"

The color was coming back into her face. She was looking up at him, into his face, into his eyes—he felt rather than saw the expression—as if she had been surprised in a radiant and worshipful dream. And he felt and knew that he—he, Brand Dawson—was the subject of the dream!

Is it likely that Brand Dawson, when he saw that glory, would frighten away the vision by mere man speech? Or that he would make a great effort to hide the worship in his own eyes?

She took a deeper breath, smiled, tried to withdraw her hand. Brand held it firm. Perhaps she read in his eyes that he intended to continue holding it firm. Perhaps she hoped that he would. Why else should she clasp her fingers more tightly into his and cease smiling, and hold his eyes with hers until the tears came?

What could a timid man do but sink to his knees at an issue like that? What else this one did was very natural and human. He leaned over the littlest girl and kissed away a tear. And when, following that—because they had been trained so—the littlest girl's soft arms found their way clingingly about his neck, he kissed her upon the lips.

IX

THE Welton stage was due past Tate's at four o'clock Monday afternoon. At that hour Brand and Clara would apply for passage to Welton, would be refused, would return to the Brule house, would find it already occupied by another tenant. Mrs. Lillie was, therefore, in good time when she arrived at half past three. She was accompanied by four large men—two from Brule's; two of her own. She had asked Brule for Bud Larkin; but Bud flatly refused to have anything to do with the errand. He was too badly cut up, he said. His horse had slipped, he said, and thrown him into a barbed-wire fence.

Mrs. Tate came to the door.

"I rode over," Mrs. Lillie explained, "to look at that empty house of Brule's. I've rented it for a month."

"Have you?" said Mrs. Tate.

"Beginning to-day. Direct from Mr. Brule. I suppose that man and the Rivers girl have got their goods out."

"Yes. They've got them out."

Mrs. Lillie's smoldering eyes had been looking for Clara's suitcase and Brand's Oxford bag; but they were not in sight.

"Are they over there now?"

"Not now."

She laughed spitefully.

"They'll find it hard getting away from Tate's to-day. The stage is engaged in advance."

"They've already gone."

"Gone?"

Mrs. Lillie allowed her voice to betray her dismay.

"Left about noon. A big touring car from Welton came for them. They're back to Welton by now. You see, Mr. Dawson telephoned to Yardley Saturday morning before the carrier left; and when the carrier got to Welton he fixed things up. The car would have come out Sunday, but the preacher had to preach."

"The preacher?"

"So they got the license and came out this morning."

"You mean—they were married?"

Mrs. Lillie's voice was pitched high. She was becoming quite careless about concealing her emotions.

"Married in that little house of Brule's. License, preacher, witnesses, ring and everything! Mrs. Dawson gave me back the things they didn't use and I brought them away; so the house is ready for you any time."

"Good!" said Mrs. Lillie between her pretty teeth. "Very good indeed! I'm very glad to hear it! In that case I can take possession of the Brule house later."

Mrs. Tate now produced two sealed envelopes.

"He left them two envelopes for you. He filled them out of two little sacks he had. He said this one contains Valentine sand and that one contains Gannett sand. He said you can get a sample of dune sand at the end of your month when you sweep out Brule's house."

"How much did he know about Brule's house?" asked Mrs. Lillie quickly.

"Oh, yes! He said tell you that Mr. Brule rode over this morning and spoke of your renting it. . . . What's more," she added as the younger woman turned her horse, "they were just as respectable as you are! Mr. Dawson slept out of doors in a hay bed against the end of the house. I peeked. And I told them so, too."

The Dawson bridal car met the Welton stage two miles north of Wallace. Both stopped—the car for the purpose of transferring an envelope parcel to the stage; the stage to transfer a letter to the car. The one was pocketed by the carrier with a grin and a word of thanks; the other, a letter addressed to Miss Clara Rivers, was delivered by the carrier to the bride.

"Mr. Ames, at Wallace, told me to give you this," he said.

The primmest pretty girl passed it to her husband. "From my school district," she explained. "Read it."

"*Dear Madam:* As president of the school board I beg to notify you that your services as teacher in our school will not be required. We are practically under the eye of a government expert; and, anyhow, our teacher must be one above an unfortunate escapade with a man.

"Yours truly,
"JAMES WATSON AMES."

The timidest man looked at his wife and laughed.

"Shall I write him a reply from Welton, my dear?"

"I wouldn't have you miss it for anything."

The reply was as follows:

"BUREAU OF SOILS
"DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

"*Dear Sir:* Your note to my wife, formerly Miss Rivers, dismissing her because of 'an unfortunate escapade with a man,' has been given to me to acknowledge. As I am the man referred to, and the escapade consisted in her marrying me, I am at a loss to know what bad effect her presence in your school would have had.

"In our previous correspondence we discussed a visit of inspection. I fear that will now have to be postponed. Mrs. Dawson, who accompanies me, naturally shrinks from receiving explanations and from making them. She joins me, however, in hoping that your next teacher may be a woman above reproach.

"Yours truly,
"BRAND DAWSON."

SALESMAN'S REPORT OF CALL
Salesman Samuel H. King Date Jan 12
Firm Called Upon Baker Mead & Smith
Address 315 Market St. Dubuque
Sold Our full line of 2132 Full Finish
Sm Complete order in concurrent mail
Brief Note on Sale You Made on This Visit Believe our
new design will take well in this territory
New Lines Introduced Our case card of 4104-Blue
and K-14 - our order
Location of Store Very Good - between Department
Store group and Automobile Row
Location of Stock Well up toward front of store
near cashier desk
Condition of Stock Left well
Dealer's Impression of Line I should say "pretty natural"
Sign Was Up ☐ Window ☐ Counter Card
Send Sign ☑ Window ☑ Counter Card
Send This Advertising Matter ☑ Page Theatre Program ☑ 2 Column Newspaper ☐ Booklets
IOWA

"Daily"

Daily your salesmen can make their reports on the form shown at the left. Daily these reports come in. Daily the sales manager knows what every man is doing, whom he has seen, what he has sold, how the territory is developing.

As it now stands, you ask your men on the road to write letters every day reporting their progress.

Instead of letters on various sizes and kinds of hotel stationery, telling sometimes of sales made, sometimes of "very interesting" talks, your reports are of standard size with standard information. The salesman can fill them out anywhere; he is less likely to forget to put in something he wanted to say, because there is a space on the form provided for every desirable piece of information.

Printing like this will save you money and it is never desirable to postpone or delay steps that will save money, eliminate error or make for greater convenience. Read the blank over and see how easily one like it could be worked out for your salesman's convenience as well as your own. Call up your printer and order a supply.

It is a good form with which to start the year 1917. Start right by specifying Hammermill Bond when you order this or any other office printing, and you eliminate the vexation of dickering about paper.

Hammermill Bond is "the utility business paper." Its quality is consistently better than its price.

Its range of use is so wide that in the purchase of printing for any office use you can safely follow the lead of firms both great and small, and standardize on Hammermill Bond.

Thus you settle by one decision the points of economy, quality, delivery, uniformity and *recognition*. This last means that when you mention Hammermill Bond your printer knows exactly what you are talking about, where to get the paper and what it will cost.

Any printer can supply it in white and 12 colors in Bond, Ripple or Linen finish.

We have prepared a set of portfolios, one applying to each generally classified business. These portfolios show the uses of Hammermill Bond as office forms and may give you a hint for installing a better system in your business. They are free. Write on your business letterhead and we will send you the portfolio that suits your business.

PRINTERS should have a complete set.

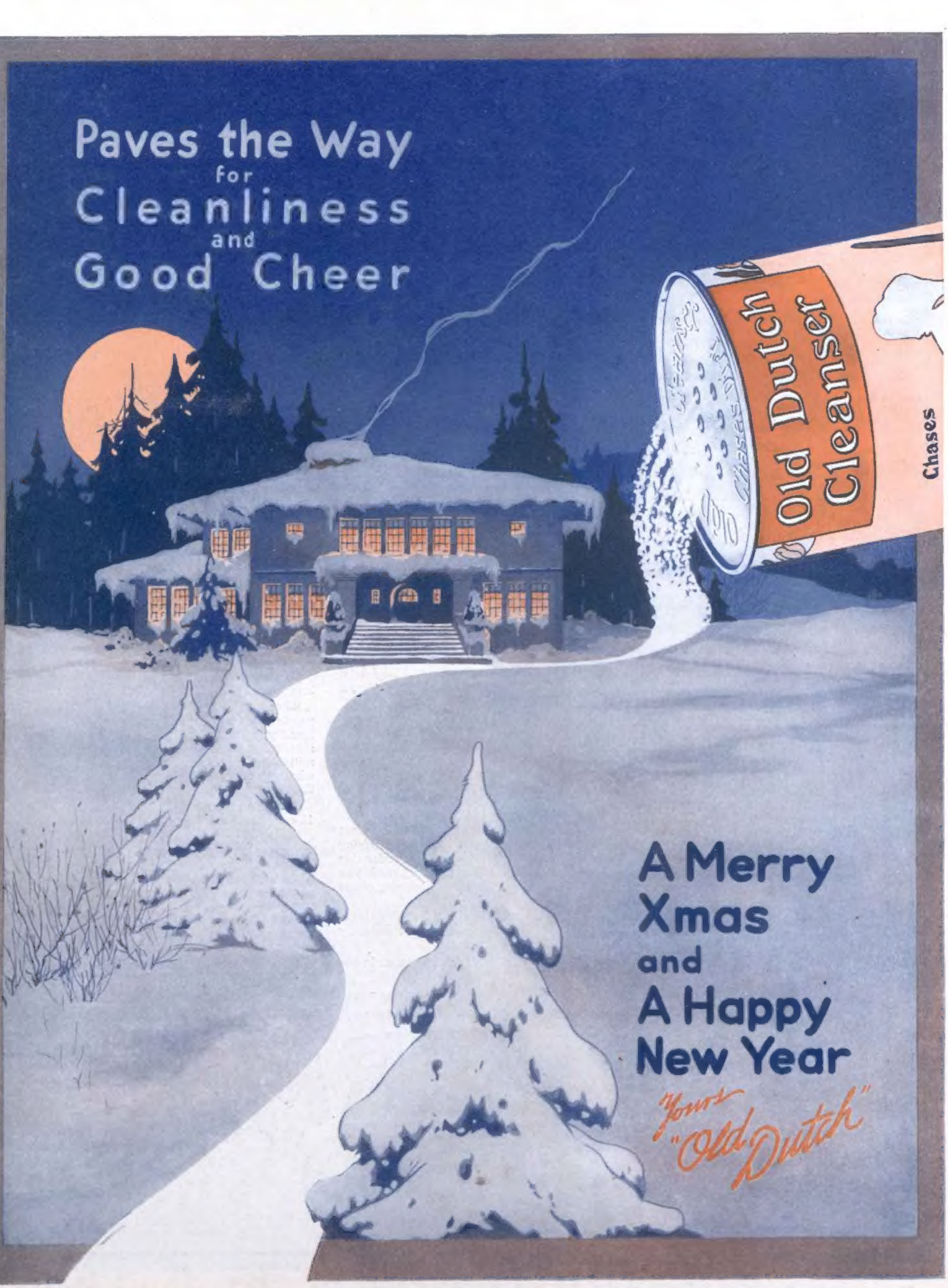
HAMMERMILL PAPER COMPANY - - - ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

This Watermark Is Our Word of Honor to the Public

HAMMERMILL BOND

"The Utility Business Paper"

Paves the Way
for
Cleanliness
and
Good Cheer



A Merry
Xmas
and
A Happy
New Year

Yours
"Old Dutch"